

I Commune with my own Heart, and my Spirit made Diligent Search. PS: 77. 5, 6.



I Commune with my own Heart, and my Spirit made Diligent Search. PS: 77. 5, 6.

BEING THE

MEDITATIONS

OF

St. AUGUSTINE,

CONTAINING IV. BOOKS.

BOOK I.

St. Augustine's Maditations. Meditations and Prayers.

BOOK II.

St Augustine on the Love St. Augustine's Manual. of God.

BOOK III.

BOOK IV.

Collected for the Benefit of Mankind in General, and may with the Bleffing of God be of use and Comfort to all Christian Families. Which is the Sincere Defire of your Humble Servant.

Made English by GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D. Late Dean of CANTERBURY.

LONDON. Printed for the Propriators. (MDCCLI.) 1568 1592.

MEDITATIONS

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St. AUGUSTER IN IL.

CONTAINING IV. BOOKS.

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BOOK H. . # . BOOK IV.

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Mes Bushing !

CEORGE STANHOPE, D.D.

Late Dong of CARTERAURY

Printed for the Impriston. (MDCCLL.)



ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCESS ANNE

Pregious Life, and continue I are Royal II etc. nets long to an a b. 7.0 Easterne and a figher

DENMARK.

Bleffing to this and facure eyes: May be been

May it please your Royal Highness,

H E following Devotions do in their original Language abundantly recommend themselves to the World, not only by their own intrinfick Worth, but by the Authority of those Venerable Names, among whose Works they are published. And, fince this last Advantage is what the English cannot receive from the Character of the Translator, Your Royal Highness will I hope, have the Goods ness to pardon his Ambition, in presuming to supply that Defect by the Honour of your Royal Highness's Patronage and Acceptance. That holy Zeal, which they are Intended to kindle in others, good Men behold with great Srtisfaction already shining bright in Your Royal Highness SECRGE STANHORE.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

so that their proper and utmost Efficacy to be attained with regard to You, Madam, is the cherishing and exercising that Devotion and Piety, which I pray God they may in some degree be fervisable for inspiring common Readers with. May the Fountain of all Goodness preserve Your Precious Life, and continue Your Royal Highness long to us, a bright Example, and a signal Bleffing to this and future Ages: May he hear and grant the daily Petitions of his Church, endue you with his Holy Spirit, enrich you with his beavenly Grace, prosper you with all Happiness, and bring you to his everlasting Kingdom. These, Madam, I beg leave with all Humility and most profound Respect, to affure your Royal Highness, are the fincere, earnest, and constant Prayers of,

(May it please your Royal Highness)

Your Royal Highnes's

April 12. 1751.

most Obedient, and

most Devoted Servant,

GEORGE STANHOPE.

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St. AUGUSTINE's

MEDITATIONS

BOOK I

CHAP. I.

A Prayer for Reformation of Life.

NSPIRE my Soul, O Lord my God, with a holy Defire of thee, my chief, my only Good that I may so earnestly defire as diligently to seek thee, so successfully seek as to be happy in finding thee; make me so sensible of that Happiness in finding, as most passionately to love thee; so effectually to express that Love, as to make some amends for my past Wickedness, by hating and for saking my former evil Courses, and entring upon a Conversation exemplarily pious for the Time to come.

Give me, Dear God, hearty Repentance, an humble and contrite Spirit; make my Eyes a Fountain of Tears, and my Hands liberal Dispensers of Alms, and unwearied Instruments of good Works, Thou art my King, reign absolute in my Heart: Subdue and expel thence all rebellious Passions, quench all the impure Burnings of sless.

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Iv Lusts; and kindle in it the bright Fire of thy Love.

Thou art my redeemer, beat down and drive out the Spirit of Pride, and impart to me, in much Mercy, the Treasure of thy own unexampled Humility, and wonderful Condescension.

Thou art my Saviour, take from me the Rage of Anger; and arm me, I beseech thee, with

the Shield of Patience.

Thou art my Creator, root out from me all that Rancor and Malice whereby my Nature is corrupted; and implant in me all that Sweetness and Gentleness of Temper, which may render me a Man made in thy own Image, and after the Likeness of thy own Divine Goodness.

Thou art my most merciful and indulgent Father, O grant thy own Child those best of Gists a sirm and right Faith, a stedfast and well-ground-

ed Hope, and a never-failing Charity.

O my Director and Governor, turn away from me, I beseech thee, Vanity and Filthiness of Mind, a wandring Heart, a scurrilous Tongue, a proud Look, a gluttonous Belly; preserve me from the Venom of Slander and Detraction, from the Itch of Curiosity, from the Thirst of Covetousness, ambition and Vain-glory; from the Deceits of Hypocrisy, the secret Poison of slattery; from the contempt of the Poor, and Oppression of the Helpless; from the Canker of envy, the Fever of Averice, and the Pestilential Disease of Blasphemy and Profaneness.

Prune

Prune away my Superfluity of Naughtiness, and purge me from all manner of Injustice, Rashness, and Obstinacy; from Impatience, Blindness of Heart, and Cruelty of Disposition.

Incline me to obey that which is good, and to comply with wholfome Advice; enable me to bridle my Tongue, and to contain my Hands from wrong and Robbery. Suffer me not to infult the Poor, to desame the Innocent, to despite my interiors, to treat my Servants with Severity and scorn; to fail in due affection towards my Friends and Relations, or in kindness and compassion towards my Neighbours and Acquaintance.

O my God, thou Fountain of Mercy, I beg thee, for the fake of the Son of thy Love, difpose me to the Love and Practice of Kindness and Mercy; that I may have a tender Fellow-feeling of my Brethren's Afflictions; and apply myself chearfully to rectify their Mistakes, to relieve their Miseries, to supply their wants, to comfort their Sorrows; to affift the Oppressed, to right the Injured, to sustain the needy, to cherish the Dejected; to releas them that are indebted to me; to pardon them that have Offended me, to love them that hate me; to render good for evil; to despise none, but to pay all due Respect to every Man. Give me Grace to imitate those that live well, to avoid and beware of them that do ill; to follow all manner of Virtue, and utterly to abandon and detest all fort of Vice. Make

Make me patient in Adversity, and moderate in Prosperity. Psal. 141. 3. Set a watch before my Mouth and keep the Door of my Lips: Wean my Affections from things below, and let them be egar and fixed upon Heaven and Heavenly Things.

CHAP. II.

An Act of Self-accusation, and imploring the Divine Mercy.

HOU, Lord, who hast formed me, knowest the Work of thy own Hands, and yet, because thy Creature, I have been bold to ask many and great Mercies, though Genes. 32. 10. Less than, and altogether unworthy of, the least of all thy Mercies. I acknowledge, O my God, with Shame and Sorrow, that not only the Gifts and Graces I have been imploring all this while, are in no Degree my due; but that many and grievous Sufferings and Judgments are what I have most justly deserved at thy Hands. But when my Soul feels itself finking under the Weight of this melancholy Reflection, the Publicans, and Harlots, and Sinners, those wandring and loose Sheep, which the good Shepherd fought so carefully, drew back from the very brink of the Hellish Precipice so feafonably, brought home upon his Shoulders to Joyfully, and laid in his Bosom so affectionately; thefe

thefe raise my drooping Spirits and give new Life to my Hopes. For thou, my God, thou haft made all Things by thy Power, and are wonderful in all thy Doings; yet art thou most Wonderful, and exceeding Glorious, in all thy Works of Pity and Love. In this Sense too, is that most true, which thou speakest of thyself by the Mouth of thy Servants, Pial. 145. 19. The Lord is good to all, and bis tender Mercies are over all bis Works. And what was faid of one particular Person we may most truly apply to thy People in general, Pial. 89. 24. 28. My Mercy will I not take from bim. For thou abhorest, despisest, forsakest no Man, but such only, as lost to all Sense of their own Duty and Happiness, do first despise and forsake thee.

first despise and forsake thee.

Hence it is, that thou doft not only not Strike, when thou art not angry, but even when thou art most Justly so, thou givest good Things liberally, upon the Request of those Wretches who have provoked thee to Anger. O my God, the Horn of my Salvation, and my Refuge, I am fadly sensible that I am one of those miserable Wretches; I have provoked thy Wrath, and done Evil in thy Sight; and yet thou holdest thy Hand. I have finned and thou hast suffered; I have offended, and still thou barest with me. If I repent, thou sparest; If I return, thou receivest me with open Arms; nay even while I delay, thou waightest patiently for my coming back to thee. Thou callest me to thee when I go astray; thou

thou invitest me, while I am deaf to thy most gracious Calls; thou stayest till I shake of my wicked Sloth; and, when thy Prodigal Child at last bethinks himself, thou meetest and embrace-est him most gladly. Thou instructest my Ignorance, comfortest my Sorrows, keepest me from falling; raisest me up when I am fallen; Matt. 7. 7. givest when I ask, art found when I seek thee, and openest the Door when I knock.

Thus, O God of my Salvation, I have nothing to offer in my Excuse; no plea to make when thou chargest me with Folly. There is no Refuge for me, but in thy Goodness and Protection; no Place to hide me in from thy All seeing Eye. Thou hast shewed me the right Way, thou hast taught me how to walk in it; thou hast threatned the Torments of Hell to affright me from Wickedness; and promited the Joys.

of Heaven to encourage my obedience.

And now, o Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort, perfect, I befeech thee, these gracious Designs upon thy Servant; possess me throly with thy Fear that I may not dare to incur thy Threatnings; and support me with the joy of thy Salvation, that I may be filled with thy Love, and chearfully run the Race that leadeth to thy gracious Promises. Thou, O Lord art my Strength, my God, my Resuge, and only Deliverer: O be thou pleased to inspire my Soul with proper Thoughts of thee; Teach my Tong fit Words to call upon thee acceptably; and enable

able my Hands and every Member to do the thing that pleaseth thee. I know right well that there is but one Way of pacifying thy Wrath, one Offering which thy Mercy will not reject: Psal. 51. 17. The Sacrifices of God are a troubled Spirit, a broken and a contrite Heart my

God will not despise.

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Yet even this I cannot give my God, unless he first vouchsafe to give it me. And therefore, O thou Father of Lights, from whom every good Thing cometh, enrich me, I beseech thee with this, I ask no other Treasure; let this be my Introduction into thy Presence, this my Desence against the Assaults of Spiritual Enemies, this my Fountain of Tears to quench the Flame of Sin; This my sure Retreat from the Fury of inordinate Passions and Desires,

Suffer me not, O thou Strength of my Soul's Health, suffer me not, I beg, to be one of those weak Christians, who for a time believe, Luke. 8. 13. Plal. 140. 7. & 27. 1. and in time of Temptation fall away. But cover thou my Head in the Day of Battle; For Thou, Thou only art my hope in the Day of Trouble, and my safety in the Time of Danger.

Thus do I come to Thee, my Light and my Salvation. imploring the Blessings of which I stand in need, and declaring the Miseries of which I am asraid. But in the Midst of this Address, I feel a check from within; my Conscience stings, and my Heart misgives me; Love bids me

hope

hope, but Sense of Sin bids me Fear, and Dread of thy Displeasure damps that Zeal with which my Heart approaches thee. When I reflect on my own Doings, I cannot but Despond, when i look up to thy Goodness, i am full of Hope. The Kindness of my God invites and pushes me forward, the wickedness of my own heart dismays and pulls me back. And all my Faults appear in such ghastly Shape before my Eyes, as almost hinders aholy Considence, but quite beat down the Boldness of Presumption.

CHAP. III.

The Sinner's Lamentation for his Prayers not being beard.

HUS is my Soul distracted with different Passions, when i appear before the Divine Majesty. And how alass! should it be otherwise? For with what Face can that Man intreat a Fayour, who hath deserved nothing but Hatred and Indignation? What Rashness is it to ask Glory. when Punishment only is his due? The Malefactor provokes his Judge, and, instead of satisfying for his Offences, he expects to be honoured with Crowns and Rewards: He lies under the Sentence of Condemnation, and is it not insolent to fue for a bounty, to which he hath no manner of Pretence? A stupid Child provokes a most affectionate Father, and is it not yet a greater Provocation. 577.11

Provocation, to assume to himself the Claim of Inheriting, till he have first retracted his undutiful Behaviour? This, O my Father I confess with Grief to be my own Case. I ask Life, and have deserved Death. I have been disloyal to my King, and yet have the Confidence to fly to him for Protection. I have despised my Judge, and armed his angry Justice against my guilty self; and yet this very Judge I betake my self to for Succour. I have stopped my Ears against the Commands of a Father; and yet I take upon me to depend upon him for his Paternal Affection and Care.

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To Thee I come, but Oh! How long do I make it before I come; How much precious time do I trifle away, in this most necessary Affair? My Feet alass! are swift to Ruin, but flow in the way that leads to Life and Safety. I run after siickness and wounds and Death, and take no care to thun the Darts which make those Wounds, even when I have felt the Smart, and am healed of the Sore. I prevented not those Dangers which might have been avoided, and am at last awakened into the Sense of thein, when they have brought me to the very Gates of the Grave. I have added to my Plagues by multiplying my Transgressions, and torn open my old Wounds, by relapsing into my former evil Courfes; and those Maladies, which the spiritual Phyfician had cured, the frantick Patient hath again brought upon himself. The Sore which was skinn'd

skinn'd over, now breaks out afresh, because inflamed by that repeated Folly, which hath forfeited the Mercy extended before. I know who hath declared, that Ezek. 18. 24. When the righteous Man turneth away from his Righteousnels, and committeb Iniquity, all the Righteousness that be bail done shall not be mentioned. And if the righteous Man, when he falls into Sin, lose all the Benefit of his former Righteousness, what good can be expected for the ineffectual Remorfe of that Sinner, who commits Evil, and repents of it, and then does the same Evil again? This is to me a mortifying Thought: To me, who have fo often 2 Pet. 2. 22. returned with the Dog to the Vomit, and with the Sow that was washed, to ber wallowing in the Mire.

How oft I have offended it is not in my Power to remember. But this I own with a heavy Heart, that in general, I have Taught Men how to fin, and made those skilful in Wickedness, who lived before in happy Ignorance of it. I have persuaded them who were averse, forced them that resisted me, and readily complyed and taken part with those, whose Inclinations were to do amiss. I have laid Snares for those who walked securely; betrayed those into the Pit, who desired to be informed in the right Way; and, that I might dare to be guilty of those Things, I have dared to forget and drive out of my Mind those good Principles, and great Obli-

grations

gations of Gratitude to so good a God, which should have restrained me from them.

But, how faulty foever my own Memory may be, yet I have to deal with a Just and Terrible Judge: Job 14. 17. Pfal 139. 2. Ifa. 42. 41. One, who leals up my Iniquities in a Bag, and spies out all my Ways. And though thou hast bolden thy Peace, and hast been still, and refrainest thyself a long time, yet I dread to think the Day will come, when thou shalt cry like a traveling Woman, and destroy and devour the Ungody at once.

CHAP. IV.

An Act of Fear.

Pfal. 50. 1, 3, 4.

HE Lord, even the most high God shall come, I know thou shalt appear, and not always keep silence: Then shall thy Glory be seen, then shall thy Voice be heard, then thy Terrors felt by all the World; when a Fire fall devour before thee, and an horrible Tempest stirr'd up round about thee. When thou Shalt call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that thou mayft judge the People. And must our Sins, which we now so industriously conceal, must every aggravating Circumstance be laid open, before so many thousand millians of Witnesses? Must I be then upbraided before so many Troops of Angels and Saints, with not my evil Deeds only, but even with the Sins of Words and Thoughts? Must I stand then helpless and triendles

triendless before so many Judges? Must I be confounded with the Reproches of fo many eminent Patterns of Piety and Virtue, whose Examples I refused to follow? Must I stand the Shock of so many Witnesses, who will testify against me, how often their Charitable Advice hath been given to me to no Purpose, and how ineffectual all the Good they did was, to provoke my Imitation! Bleffed God! What shall I have to say, or how shall I find an Evasion? The very Apprehension racks me at this Distance; my Conscience flies in my Face; and I have this difmal Prospect constantly in View. I see and daily lament my Danger; and every vicious Disposition helps to dress up the woful Scene. My fecret Imaginations sting me, my Covetousness fetters me, Pride accuses, Envy gnaws and confurnes me, Lust inflames, Intemperance shames me; Detractions tortures, Ambition supplants, Violence and Fraud upbraid; Anger disorders, Gentleness makes me tecure, Sloth overcomes, Hypocrify cheats me, Flattery makes me effeminant, Applause and Favour, vain; Slander, Full of Anguish,

These, my Great, my only Deliverer, these are the sterce Nations that make war against me: these the Acquaintance I have been bred up with this the Company I have delighted to frequent, and contracted the most intimate Familiarity with. Thus the Objects of my Love condemn me, and what I thought most commendable and dear, turns to my Same and Dishonour, These

learnt of, the Masters, or rather the Tyrants I have lived in subjection to; the Counsellors I have been governed by, the Cronics I have lived and acted with.

Psal. 120. 5, 6.

Woe is me, my God, that I have thus long dwelt in Mefech, and had my Habitation among the Tents of K dar For fure whatever Reason David had, i have much greater to lament, that my Sonl bath long duelt among them that are Enemies to Peace, But thou O Lord, art still my Hope and Stay. Pfal 143. 2. In thy Sight, it is true, shall no flesh living be justified. I put not therefore any Trust in the Sons of Men: Pal. 130. 3. For if thou Lord shouldst be extream to mark what is amis, who among them is there that might abide it? And therefore, unless thou prevent the Sinner with thy Mercy, and Pardon first what hath been done amis, there cannot be any righteous to be glorified, any qualified for a Reward of what hath been done well.

Therefore it is, my God and my Salvation, that i believe in thee, Rom. 2. 4. Psal. 119. 109 John 6, 37, 44. As knowing that thy Goodness leadeth to Repentance. How sweet are those words of thine to my Ihroat, yea sweeter than Honey unto my Mouth, that no Man cometh to thee except the Father draw him, and that him who cometh to thee thou wilt in no wise cost out. Since then thou hast not only instructed me in, but even given me new Life, by the Knowledge of this Truth,

Truth, and thus again made me thy own Craature, I do, with all imaginable Earnestness with all the Sincerity and Zeal my Heart is capable of, befeech thee, Almighty Father, together with thy most dearly beloved Son, and Thee, O best beloved Son, with thy most sweet Comforter, draw me, that i may run after thee, and be Cantice 1.

3, 4. delighted with the Odour of thy precious Oint ment.

CHAP. V.

An Address to the Father in the Sons Name.

I Call upon thee, my God, yea even upon Thee do I call, who declarest thyself Psal 145. 18, Nigh unto all such as call upon thee in Truth, Yea thou thyself art Truth, and therefore teach me, for thy Mercies Sake, to perform this Service as i ought; for without thee i know not how to please thee; and therefore do make it my most humble and earnest Request, to be taught by Truth itself. All Wisdom without thee is but Folly, and to know thee alone is the Sum and Persection of Knowledge. Inform me therefore, O divine Wisdom, For i am fully persuaded, that He, and He alone is Psal 44, 12, Blessed, whom thou nurturest and teachest in thy Law.

My Desire is to call upon thee, and to do it in Truth: But what can calling upon Truth itself in Truth mean, except applying to the Fa-

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Word is Truth, and the beginning of all thy Word in the Gospel hath told us, that John 1. 1. in the beginning was the word. in the Word of Truth i call upon thee, O essential and original Truth, and beg to be directed in, and thoroughly taught the Truth.

And what can be more delightful, than toaddress him that begot, in the Name of his only begotten? Than to move the Father to Tenderness by the mention of his own dear Son? Than to appeale the Wrath of a King. By interpoling the Darling of the Family, the Heir of all his Dominons? These are the Powerful Methods used by Malefactors for Release out of Prison; by Slaves and Captives for obtaining Freedom; by condemned Persons for Pardon; nay, powerful enough to prevail, not for Pardon only, but for even Favour and Advancement too: A King's Anger cools instantly, if the Offenders are such Favorites of the Prince, as to make use of his Name and interest: And Servants find it no hard Marter to come of without Blows if the Children employ their pretty Endearments in their Behalfe. Since then thele Methods are so success ful below, why should they not have the same good Effect above? i will beg the Almighty Father for the Sake of his Almighty Son, Ptal 142: 9. to bring my Soul out of Prison, that i may give thanks to his Name. Loole me, Lord, from the Bands of my Sins, for the take of thy only, thy coeternal eternal Son; and by the intercession of that dear, that divine image and Brightness of thy Glory, now sitting at thy right Hand, be reconciled to a poor sinful Wretch; and instead of that Death my Wickednesses deservedly threaten me with, raise and restore me to a Life of Hope and Blessedness.

This is indeed the only Advocate i can employ. For whither should i flee, or whose interest should i depend upon with the Father, except to go to him, who is 1 John 2. 2. the propitiation for our Sins; who also fitteth at the right Hand of God, making intercession for us; This therefore is my Mediator with thee, O heavenly Father; this my perfect High Prieft, Heb 7. 25, 27. ix. 11, 12: who needs not to be fanctified with other Blood; but hath made Attonement, and stands before thee pure and bright, in virtue of his own Blood, with which he was washed for our Sakes. This is that holy and unblemished, that acceptable and perfect Sacrifice, offered for a fweet smelling Savour unto God. Ifai 53. 7. 1 Pet 2. 23, 24, This that Lamb without Spot, who was dumb before his Shearers and though reviled and buffetted and spit upon, yet be opened not bis Mouth. This that righteous Perfon who did no Sin, but condescended to bear our. Sins, and by his own Stripes to heal our putrified Sores.

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The Son's Sufferings represented to the Father.

OOK therefore, gracious Father, look upon this best and dearest of Sons, who hath endured the worst and wickedest Indignities upon my Account, Confider, most merciful King of Heaven, who it is that fuffered, and at the fame time think for whom he fuffered fuch bitter things. Rom. 8. 32. Gal 3. 13. Ifa. 53. 7. Is not this, my God, that spotless Innocent, whom, though thy Son, thou wert pleased not to spare, that he might redeem thy Servant? Is not this that Author and Giver of Life, Acts 8. Phil. 2. 8, who was led as a Sheep to the Slaughter and becoming obedient even unto Death, was content to die in the most painful and ignominious manner? Othou, whose wonderful Wisdom contrived the whole Mystery of Man's Redemption, reflect, I befeech thee, that this is that very Person, who though begotten of, and resembling thee, in thy Almighty Power, yet was ordained by thee to partake of my Weakness, It was thy own divine, which cloathed itself with my human Nature, and in my Flesh ascend the Cross. and felt the Torments of a most dolorous Death. Olet this unspeakable Instance of Condescenfion and Love be ever before thine Eyes! See that delightful Son extended on the Cross, Behold his holy Hands stained with innocent Blood and

and pardon those iniquities which my wicked Hands have been polluted with. Behold his naked Side pierced with a cruel Spear, and wash me in that Fountain, which by the Eyes of Faith I fee flow from that Wound. Behold those blessed Feet, which never Plal 1. 1. flood in the Way of Sinners, but walked in the Paths of thy Commandments, thrust through with merciles Nails; and bold up my Goings in thy Paths, and give me grace' to hate all evil Ways, and to chuse the Way of Truth and Righteousness. I befeech thee, O King of Saints, may it please thee by this most holy of all thy Saints, by this powerful Redeemer, so to dispose my Heart and Actions, that I may be united to him in the same Spirit, who did not difdain to be united to me in the same Flesh. Obferve that Head reclined upon his Breast, and expiring in the Pangs of Death; and let this Proof of thy uncreated Son's Humanity, prevail with my most merciful Creator, for Compassion upon his own wretched Creature's Infirmity.

See his pale Breast, his purple Sides, his Bowels parched with Thirst, his beautiful Eyes languishing in Death, his Arms grown st ff, his Royal Face betmeared, his Legs extended, his Feet drenched with Streams of precious Blood: Look, glorious Father of this dear Child, Look upon this Body, bruised, and broken, and torn, and then in Mercy call to Mind whereof I am made. Let the Punishment of God and Man pertonall united, attone for a Man created after his

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and thy Likeness. Let the sufferings of the Redeemer be ever in thy Sight, and in them overlook the Offences of thy Redeemed. This (my God) is he, Isai 53. 8. Matth 3. 17. 1 Pet 2. 22. Isai 53. 12. Luke 22. 37. Whom thou thoughtest sit to smite for the Transgressions of thy People, tho he was that beloved in whom thy Soul delighted. this is he on whom there was no Guilt, tho he was content to be reckoned among the Transgressors.

CHAP. VII.

An Acknowledgment that sinful Man was the Cause of Christ's Sufferings.

V HAT hadft thou done, O charming In-nocence, to bring thee as a Criminal before thy Enemies Bar? Or how hadft thou deferved to be treated with such rude and insolent, fuch unrelenting and triumphant Barbarity? What Passage of thy whole Life could they fix an Accusation upon, what Crime alledge to countenance fo rigorous a Sentence? It none, (as none they could) whence then thy shameful bitter Death, or how camest thou to be condemned as a vile Miscreant? 'Twas I, alas 'twas wretched I, that gave thee all those Pains; 'Twas I deserved the Death that thou endureds; and my Offences gave those Scourges, those Nails, that Spear, the Power of flaying, and wounding, and and killing thee. O wonderful Process ! O Mystery of Justice! That the Wicked should offend,

and the Righteous be punished for it! that the Guilt and the Condemnation should be so separated; that the Servant should contract a Debt, and the Lord to whom it was due make Satisfaction; that Man should provoke the divind Vengance, and God should feel the Smart of it! How low, O Son of God did thy Humility stoop! How fervent was thy Love! How boundless

thy Compassion!

For I have done wickedly and thou art call'd to account for it; larmed an angry Justice against myself, and it is discharged upon thy Head: Mine is the Crime, and Thine the Torture: I have been proud and Thou art humble; I am puffed up, and thou hast emptied thyself: I have been rebellious, and thy Obcdience hath expiated for it. I have been intemperate and Thou hast hungered and thirsted for it: my ungoverned Appetite finned in the forbidden, and Thy immence Love submitted to hang on the accurfed Tree ! I eat the Fruit, and Thou feelest the Pains: I wallow in the Pleasures, and Thou art torn with Natls : The Honey in my Month is turn'd to Gall in thy Stomach. The tempting Eve rejoices with Me, the forrowful Mary fuffers and laments with thee. Thus is my Wickedness and want of Love to God, thus is thy Righteousness and inexpressible Love to Man, manifested in this marvelous Dispensation.

And now my God and King, Pial 116. 11.

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make for all the Benefits thou haft done unto me? Surely it is not in the Power of Man to find out any Requital answerable to such Bounty: For how should the Narrowness of a finite Mind extend to any thing fit to be compared with infinite Compassion ? How should a poor Creature be capable of any Recompence fuitable to the Mercy of an Almighty Creator? And yet, my dear Saviour, so wonderfully is this Matter Ordered, that even Man, even I weak and worthless though i be, may find something, which thou art pleased to accept in return; if by thy Grace my Soul be broken and humbled, Gal 5. 3. and crusify this Flesh with its affections and Lusts. when wrought up to this holy Disposition, i then begin to fuffer for, and live to thee; and, in some fort, to pay back what thou hast endured when dying. for me. Thus by gaining a Conquest upon the inwardMan, i am by thee enabled to win the Crown by my outward; and by my triumphing over the Flesh in spiritual Trials, that very Flesh hath the Courage to submit gladly for thy take to bodify Persecutions and Death. This is the utmost my Condition will admit; and this though but little in itself, yet when proceeding from the same Principle of Holy Love, thou art graciously pleased to accept, as the utmost poor Mortals can do, in acknowledgment of their great Maker. This is the Cure of finful Souls; this bleffed Jefus, the Sovereign Antidote thy Mercy hath provided for us.

I befeech thee therefore, Pfal 25. 5. by thy tender Mercies, which have been ever of old, pour such Balm into my Wounds, as may dispel the Venom of my Diseases, and restore me to a spiritual Health and Soundness. Let me drink of thy heavenly Sweetness, and be so ravished with the Taste, as ever after to disrelish the sensual Delights of the World, to despise its Pleasures, and chearfully Encounter the Afflictions of this present Life; and so to fix my Heart upon true noble Joys, as always to Disdain the empty and transitory Shadows, which Flesh and Blood is so foolishly

fond of, and to fearful of parting with.

Let me not, I beseech thee, Esteem or Delight in any Thing but thee : Let all this World can give without thee, be counted no better than Drofs and Dung. Let me hate most ireconcilably whatever Displeases thee; and what thou Lovest let me most eagerly Desire, and incessantly purfue. Let me feel no fatisfaction in any Joys without thee; nor any Reluctancy in the greatest Sufferings for thee. Let the mention of thy Name be always a Refreshment, and the Remembrance of thy Goodness an inexhaustible Spring of Comfort, to my Soul. Let Tears be my Meat Day and Night, fo I may attain to thy Righteousnels; and Pfal 119. 72. the Law of thy Mouth always. dearer unto me than thousands of Gold and Sitver. Let me aim at nothing to much as to do thee Service; nor detest nor avoid any Thing in Comparison of finning against thee. And for what I have

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have unhappily done of that kind already, I entreat thee, my only Refuge and Hope, to Pardon for thy own Mereies Sake. Let my Ears be ever open to the Voice of thy Law, and suffer not Psal 141. 4. my Heart to incline to any evil thing, that I never comply with them that practife Wickedness, nor take Shelter in trifling Pretences to excuse or indulge myself in doing what I ought not. And once more, I beg thee, by thy own unparallel'd Humility, Psal 36. 11. that the Foot of pride may not come against me, nor the Hand of the ungodly cast me down.

CHAP. VIII.

The Soul's Application of Christ's Death, and Sufferings to herself by Faith.

THOU seest, my Lord, my God, I have done my utmost to incline thy Mercy; I have with a most sincere Zeal, offered to thee the best the dearest, the most acceptible Thing I have: Nay, i have nothing else indeed, no Addition to make, since in this one i place my whole Trust, and make a present at once of all i value or depend upon. For i have Addressed to thee by my only Advocate, and thy only Son: I Tim 2. 5. that one Mediator between God and Man, that glorious intercessor by whom i assuredly expect Acceptance and Forgiveness, i have by my Words poured out before thee, sent that Word in my behalf to thee

thee, which thou didst heretofore send down from Heaven for my Sins. i have paid down the Price of that Passion, which thy own Son, i most firmly believe hath undergone, for the Release of that Debt to thy Justice, which my Misdeeds have contracted, i believe that thy God-head, fent thus into the World, did take upon him my Manhood; that in this State he vouchsafed to be Bound and Buffetted, to be Derided and Spit upon; to be Nailed, and Pierced, and Crucified. And this Nature of mine, after being wrapt up in Swadling Clothes, and moistned with infant Tears after the Toils of Youth, and Mortifications of Fastings, and Watchings, and long Journeys; after being furrowed with Scourgings, torn upon the Cross, numbered among the Dead, and at last Honoured with a glorious Resurrection; this Nature of mine, i fay, thy God-head united to it, i most afferedly believe, hath now exalted to the Joys of Heaven, and feated at the right Hand of thy Majesty on high This is my Confidence, this the Reconciliation for my Sins, this the Attonement thou half accepted for them.

Remember then, in much Mercy, the Quality of thy Son, the Condition of thy Servant Redeemed by him. Look upon the Maker, and Despite not the Work of his Hands. Take the Shepherd into thy Embraces, and cast not out the stray Sheep which he brings Home upon his Shoulders. For this is that careful Shepherd, who when his Luke 15. Sheep wandered over steep Hills and thorny

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thorny Vales, and desolate Wildernesses, sought and brought it back: with wonderous Skill and Pains. and when, it was faint and just expiring, sustained and carried it, tied it tast to himself by the straitest Bands of Love; listed it out of the Pi of Error and Consusion; and with many a kind and tender Embrace rejoiced over it, and fetched the poor less silly Creature Home to the Ninety and Nine, which lay safe in his own Fold.

See then, my God and King, see the good Shepherd bringing to thee the Sheep laid to his Charge: He undertook to save Man by thy appointment, and he hath performed the Undertaking so as to restore to thee Pure and Spotless thy once polluted Creatures: He brings in Safety back that Prey, which the Wolf and Robber had carried off by Violence. He brings that Servant into thy Presence, whom his own guilty Conscience had put upon fleeing from thy Sight; that fo the Punishment due to his Deserts, might be remitted through his Lord's Satisfaction; and the Offender, who had nothing to look for but to be Banished for ever into Hell, might, under the Protection of this glorious Conqueror, be affured of Admittance into his heavenly Country. I needed none to help me in offending thee, but without help I never could have appealed thee. Thou therefore, who alone couldst be, thou my God, wast my helper; and thy beloved Son effected what could not have been effected, had he not taken my Nature upon him, in orderto cure my InfirmiInfirmities, But thus he became our perfect Cure, by rendering the same Nature the Subject of both the Sin and the Sacrifice; and drawing the Antidote out of the same Root from whence the Poison had sprung. Thus hath he made me a fit Object of Mercy, while sitting at thy right Hand in my substance, he makes it impossible for thee to hate that in me, which thou canst not but Love in him. This is my Hope, and the Joy of

my Confidence.

If then I do, as well as I may, feem Vile and Despicable in thy Sight, for my own Impurities; yet look upon me at least with an Eye of Pity; when thou beholdest my Likeness in the Son of thy Love: Behold the Mystery of a Human Body in him, and remit the Guilt of the same Human Body in me. Hide my Sins in his Wounds, and let my Stains be washed in his most precious Blood. Flesh provoked thee to Wrath, let Flesh likewise prevail with thee for Mercy; and as my Flesh drew me into Sin, so let my Saviour's draw thee to Compassion. Great, I confess, are my Faults, and the Punishments due to them; but greater, infinitely greater, are the Merits and Sufferings of my dear Redeemer. Between my Sins and his Righteousness, there is no Comparison, no proportion at all, either for Quality or Degree, no more than there is between God and Man, between an Attom and an Infinite.

For what is it possible for Man to be guilry of, which the Son of God made Man, must not needs

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have Compensated? What Pride can be so extravagant, that his Humility did not exceed and make amends for? What Dominion could Death have so absolute, that the Death of the Cross should not overthrow it? If then Almighty God would please to weigh the Sins of Man in a Balance against the Goodness of his Saviour, East and West, Heaven and Hell, are not so far distant from each other. And therefore, O my God, let my manifold Offences be pardoned, for the many more Pains and Sufferings of thy dear Son. Let his Piety Atone for my want of it; his ready Obedience for my Perversenes; his Meekness for my untractable Temper; set his Humility against my Pride, his Patience against my Discontent, his Kindness against my Hard-heartedness; the Calmness of his Soul against my Fretfulness, and unruly Passions; his Gentleness against my Rage; his universal and unwearied Love against my Hatred, and Revenge, and Cruelty.

CHAP. IX.

APrayer to the Holy Ghoft.

ND now, O Holy Spirit, Love of God, who proceedest from the Almighty Father, and his most blessed Son, powerful Advocate, and sweetest Comforter, insule thy Grace, and descend plentifully into my Heart; lighten

lighten the dark Corners of this negligent Dwelling, and scatter there thy chearful Beams; dwell in that Soul which longs to be thy Temple; water that barren Soil, over grown with Weeds and Briars, and lost for want of cultivating, and make it fruitful with thy Dew from Heaven. Heal the lurking Distempers of my inward Man; strike me through with the Dart of thy Love, and kindle Holy Fires in my Breast, such as may Fiame out in a bright and devout Zeal, actuare and enliven the heavy Mass, burn up all the Dross of sensual Affections, and disfusing themselves throwvery Part, possess and purify and warm my

whole Spirit and Soul and Body.

Make me to Pfal 56 8- drink of thy fpiritual Pleasures as out of a River; and let their heavenly sweetness so correct my Palate, as to leave no Defire, no Relish for the gross unhealthful Folfomness of worldly Delights. Plal 43. 1. 143 10 Judge me, O Lord, and defend my Caufe against the ungodly People. Teach me to do the thing that pleafeth thee, for thou art my God. I believe, that in whomfoever thou dwellest, the Father and the Son do likewise come, and inhabit that Breast, And Oh ! happy is that Breaft, which is honoured with io glorions, so divine a Guest, in whose Company the Father and the Son always come, and take up their Abod ! O that it may please thee to come to me, thou kindest Comfortor of mourning Souls, thou mighty Defence in Distress, and ready help in time of Need. O come

come thou purger of all inward Pollutions, and healer of all spiritual Wounds and Discates. Come thou ftrength of the Feeble, and raifer of them that fall. Come thou Luke 1, Pfal 52. 25. 9 68. 5. patter down of the Proud, and Teacher of the Meek and Humble. Come thou Father of the Fatherless, and just Avenger of defolate Widows. Come, come, thou hope of the Poor, and Refreshment of them that languish and Faint. Come thou Star and Guide of them that fail in this tempettuous Sea of the World; thou only Haven of the Toft and Shipwreck'd. Come thou Glory and Crown of the living and only Safeguard of the dying. Come Holy Spirit, in much Mercy come, make me fit to receive thee, and condescend to my Infirmities, that my Meanness may not be Disdained by thy Greatness, nor my Weakness by thy Strength: All which I beg for the take of Jetus Chrift my Saviour, who in the Unity of thee, O Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth with the Father, one God World without end. Amen.

CHAP. X.

An Act of Humility.

I KNOW, O Lord, and do with all Humility acknowledge myself, an object altogether unworthy of thy Love, but sure I am, thou art an Object altogether worthy of Mine. Iam not good enough

enough to serve thee, but thou hast a Right to the best Service I can pay. Do thou then impart to me some of that Excellence, that shall supply my own Want of worth. Help me to cease from Sin according to thy Will, that I may be capable of doing thee Service according to my Duty. Enable me so to guard, and govern myself, so to begin and fiinish my Course, that when the Race of Life is run, I may fleep in Peace and Rest in thee. Be with me unto the End that my fleep may be Rest indeed, my Rest perfect Security, and that Security a bleffed Eternity. Amen.

CHAP. XI.

A Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

TE praise, and bless, and acknowledge thee, both in Heart and Voice, even to thee, 0 Father, begotten of none; thee O Son, the only begotten of the Father; theeO Holy Ghoft eternal Comforter: To this Holy undivided Trinity, be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C H AP. XII.

A Confession of God's Omnipotence and Majesty.

God most High, three Persons but one Essence, the same Majesty and Power, Lord God Almighty, the least of all thy Servants, and meanest t to

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meanest Member of thy mystical Body, the Church desires to ascribe to thee all Honour and Praise, the names that the little Knowledge and Power, with which thou hast been pleased to endue him, is capable of. I have no present but myself to make, and that which is not in itself worthy thy acceptance, I beg thou wilt be pleased to look upon, not according to its own Value, but according to thy own rich Mercy, and that sincerity, and Faith unfeigned, with which I do most Joyfully Confectate it to thy Service.

I believe in, and heartily pray to thee, Great King of Heaven and Earth; I acknowledge Fa ther, Son and holy Ghast; three Persons, but one Effcence; the True the Almighty God, of one ancompounded, incorporeal, invisible, uncircumcribed Being; in whom there is nothing higher or lower, greater or leffer; but perfect and equal all: Great without Quantity, Good without Quaity, Eternal without Time; Life without Death, Strength without Weakness, Truth without Falfhood, Omnipresent without Space, filling all Things and Places without Extension, passing every where without Motion, abiding every where without Confinement, communicating to all thy Creatures without diminshing thy own Fulness, governing all Things without Labour; without Beginning, ane yet giving Beginning to all, making all Things mutable, and yet unchangeable thyself; infinite in Greatness, and unbounded in Power, of Goodness indefectible, of Wisdom incomprehenfi-

comprehentible, wonderful in thy Counfels, juf in thy Judgments, unfearchable in thy Thoughts, true in all thy Words, holy in all thy Works, a. boundant in Mercies, Long-suffering towards Sinners, Compassionate to all that Repent: Always the same without Mixture or Defilement, Allay or Accidents; Eternal, Immortal Unchangeable. Thy Will alters not, thy Juffice is not byaffed, thy Mind is not disturbed with Griefs, or Pleasures, or Passions; with thee nothing is forgotten, nothing which Was once loft, called to Remembrance again; but all Things, Paft or future, are ever present to thy capacious Mind Whose Duration neither began in Time nor encreates by Length of Time, nor shall it ever end but thou livest before, and in, and after all Ages, Thy Glory is Eternal, thy Power Supream, thy Kingdom Everlasting, and World without end, Amen.

CHAP, XIII.

Of the Incarnation of the Divine Word.

THUS far, Omy God, the searcher and seer of Hearts, I have professed my Faith in thy Power and Majesty. Rom 10.9. Now as my Heart believes unto Righteousness, so my Mouth shall Confess unto Salvation, that unspeakable Goodness express to Mankind in the latter Ages of the World. Thou O Father, art the only Person

fon of whom we no where read that he was fent. But of thy Son the Apostle hath instructed us, that, Gal 14 9. When the fulness of Time was come, God fint forth bis Son. By faying God fent bim, he means that the Person thus sent came into the World, when he condescended to be born of the Virgin Mary, and made. his appearance in

our Flesh, a true and perfect Man.

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But what means that Passage of the Evangelist, John 1. 10. He was in the World, and the World was made by him? The Sense is, that he was sent hither in regard to his Humanity, but was really here before, and all along, in respect of his Divinity. Now this Mission I believe, and thankfully acknowledge to have been the whole Work of the whole Trinity. But O Holy Father, how great was thy Love, and how tender the Almighty Creator's Concern for his poor Creatures, Rom 8. 32, 5, 8. which spared not his own Son, but delivered him up freely for us, and, which is the most astonishing Circumstance for us, Phil 2. 8. while we were yet sinners? That Son became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Crofs, Col 2. 14. he took the Hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to that Cross of his; thus crucifying fin, and flaying Death, he only was free when in the Regions of Death and Captivity; John 10. 18. because he only had Power to lay down his Life, and to take it up again for us.

He therefore was the Victor and Victim, and therefore the Victor because the Victim. He was

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the Priest and the Sacrifice, and for that Reason the true High-Priest, because the true Sacrifice to thee our God. Firm therefore are those Hopes I entertain of haveing all my Diseases healed by him because grounded upon Heb 7. 25. his sitting at thy right Hand, and living ever to make Inter coffion for us. Those dileases, I must own. are many, and fore, for the Prince of this World hath much in me; but I apply to thee for Health, by the merits of that Redeemer, in whom his Malice could find nothing. Justify me by him, John 14 30. 1 Pet 2. 22. who did no Sin, neither was guile found in his Mouth. By that holy and spotless Head, convey Health and Salvation to his weak polluted Member. Deliver me, I beseech thee, from my sinful Habits, my vicious Dispofitions, my Faults of Wilfulness, of Negligence and Ignorance, Fill me with thy Grace, and help me to excel and resemble thee, the Persection of Goodness. Keep me stedfast in the Way of thy Commandments, and enable me to grow and persevere in Virtue to the End, that I may live and die according to thy Will,

CHAP, XIV.

An Act of Irust in. and I banksgiving for, Christ and his Sufferings.

WHAT Foundation could a finful Creature, laden with Guilt, and quite overwhelmed with

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with Frailties, have for hope? What could poor I whole Consciene upbraids me with infinite Faults and Neglects, have looked for but Judgment and fiery Indignation? had not thy Word O God, been made Flesh, and dwelt among us? But this Marvelous Dispensation will nomore suffer me to Dispare, than my own Condition without it could have Justified my Hope. For who shall dare to Despair when we Rom 5. 10 even while we were Ennemies were reconciled by the Death of thy Son; and therefore without all Question being reconciled, shall much more be saved by his Life? This is my Hope, the Rock of Confidence, even the precious Blood of thy Son, which he shed for us, and for our Salvation, in him I revive, and take Courage to approach thee, Phil 3. 9. not baving my own Righteoufness, or prefuming in any Degree upon any Work of mine, but that Righteou/ness which is of thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, even the Righteousness of Faith in his Sacrifice for me.

For this Igive thee my most unseigned Thanks, O tender Lover of Souls, who by thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ has created us again to a new Life, when we had made ourselves nothing, worse than nothing; and wonderfully delivered and restored us to a spiritual Being, when we were sunk, and absolutely lost, in Sin and Misery.

All Praise be to thy fatherly Compassion which from the bottom of my Heart ladmire and thank-viully adore, for that inexpressible love, wherewith

thy Bowels yearned over undone Man, wherehy thou didst extend to most unworthy Wretches such marvelous Grace, didst send thy only begotten out of thy own Bosom, for our universal Benefit, and save poor Sinners then the Children of Wrath and Perdition.

All Honour and Praise be to thee for his miraculous Incarnation and holy Nativity, whereby he took Flesh of the Substance of his blessed Mother for us and for our Salvation, that, as he had been before from all Eternity, very God of God, so he

might be in time very Man of Man.

Glory and Praise be to my God for his Passion and painful Crucifiction, for his Death and Resurrection, Acts 1. for his triumphant Ascention into Heaven, and the Session of our Nature at the right Hand of the Majesty on high. For on the fortieth Day after his rising from the Dead, he went up in the Sight of his Disciples far above all Heavens, and from this Throne did, according to his most true Promise, shower down the holy spirit most plentifully upon the Sons of Adoption.

All honour and Thanksgiving be unto thee, O Father; for ever, for that shedding of his most precious Blood whereby we are redeemed; and for the sweet Pledges, and lively Memorials of that Love, the holy and life-giving Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Whereby the Members of thy Church are supplied with Daily Food from Heaven, washed and sanctified from their Sins, and admitted to be Partakers of the Divine Nature,

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Bleffed and forever bleffed be that aftonishing and unspeakable Goodness, which so tenderly loved Wretches so unworthy of thy Love, and saved a perishing World by thy only, thy best beloved Son For no Instance of thy Mercy can compare with this; no Expression of it can be carried higher, than that thou shouldest John 3. 16. 17. 3. so Love the World as to give thy only begotten Son that all who believe in him should not Perish, but have everlasting Life: And this is Life everlasting, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast loved; to know thee by a right Faith; and to manifest that Knowledge, by Works suitable to such a Faith.

CHAP. XV.

Of God the Father's Love to Mankind.

Bowels unmeasurable! O Love inestimable! Thou deliverest up a Son to Ranfom a Servant; an only, an entirely beloved Son, for a wicked and rebellious Servant. God was made Man, that undone Man might be rescued from the Tyranny and Power of Devils. How infinite Kind was thy Son our Lord, how tender of Souls, whose Pity was content to Stoop so low for our Salvation so low as not only to take our Nature off his Virgin Mother, but in it to sheed the Blood he took, and endure the Scandal and Torture of the Cross! Behold the merciful

merciful and gracious God, coming in Grace and Mercy, infinite from his own Divine Effence and such as no Being but God, who is Love and Goodness itself, could be capable of; coming Luke 15 4, 5, 6. Matt 18. 11. to seek and save that which was lost. Behold the careful Shepherd looking for his stray Sheep, searching till he find it, and when he hath found it, carrying it back to the Fold upon his Shoulders with most affec-

tionate Joy,

Thing like this heard of? Who can without Amazement think of Bowels so enlarged? Who can forbear admiring, adoring, exulting with transports of Joy, at the infinite Goodness of thee my God, and the Love wherewith thou lovest us? Rom 8. 3. Thou sentest thy own Son in the likeness of singul Flesh, and sor sin didst condemn Sin, that we might be made thy Righteousness in him. For 2 Cor 5. 21. this is the Paschal Lamb without Blemish and without Spot who by his Death bath "destroyed Death, and by his rising to Life "again, hath restored us everlasting Life."

But what alass! Are we able to repay thee for such wonderfull Benefits, such astonishing Demonstrations of thy Concern for us? What Praises, what Thanksgivings are sufficient? Though thou shouldst impart to us all the Knowledge and Wisdom, all the Activity and Power of Angels, which wait continually about thy Throne, and execute all thy Pleasure, yet could we not be Qua-

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issed for any Action worthy so vast a Favour: Though every Limb were a Tongue, yet could we not even thus found forth thy Praises as they deserve. For Angels themselves are too weak to comprehend the Depth and Glories of this Mystery, Infinite as thy felf, and therefore such as could only be effected, such as can perfectly be known, by thy own Knowledge only, Infinite as thy own Goodness. How have we deserved that thy Son, and our God, should Heb 2. 16. take upon him not the Nature of Angels, but should take the Seed of Abraham? That he should become like to us Mortals in all Things, Sin only excepted: That he should Honour this Mortality with the Glories of his Refurrection, with a Crown of Immortality; that he should exalt it far above all Heavens, above all the Troops of Angels, above Cherubim and Seraphim, and Place it at thy own right Hand: That Angels should Praise, that Dominions should adore, that all the Powers of Heaven should fall down and humble themselves before, and cast their Crowns at the Feet of this Man and God in one Person, seated in Dignity so far above them all.

This Exaltation is my joyful Hope; this my firm and only Confidence. For even that Jesusin that glorious Lord, is a part of every one of us; Ephel 5. 30. we are of his Flesh, his Blood, and his Bones. Now where a Part of me already Reigns there I blieve myself shall Reign also; and in the Triumphe and Glories of his Flesh, I plainly see

and am affured of the Honours done to my own, Though I am a miserable Sinner, yet the Participation of his Grace will not suffer me to Despond: And, if my own Vileness exclude me from this Bliss, yet my Substance already admitted to it, opens a Passage for me thither too. For God is not, cannot be, so unnatural, as to forget that Manhood, with which himself is cloathed, which he put on for my Sake, and which he will one Day receive to himself for my unspeakable Benefit.

No, no our God is Merciful and Gracious Tender-hearted, and of great Goodness. He Loves his own Flesh his own Body, and his own Bow-That Flesh of ours, in which he rose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven, and now does fit in heavenly Places, cannot but Love us, because this in Effect is but Love itself: We have the Privilege of our own Blood flowing in his Veins: We are his Body, and his Substance. He is our Head from whence the Members are derived, to which they are inseparably united; and of us also is that Ordinance of God in the fift Creation verified, Gen 2. 23. Matt 19. 6. that be is Bone of my Bones and Flesh of my Flesh, and we two are no more two but one Flesh: Now the Apostie tells us and if he had not, even Nature itself tells us Ephel 5. 29, 30, 31, 32. that no Man ever yet bated bis own Flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it. And this Principle of Nature he hath Justified the Application of to our eternal Comfort, and most affured Hope, when he adds those remarkable

remarkable, those most precious Words, this is a great Mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Two Natures in Christ.

OR this cause, O Lord my God, my Tongue, my Heart, my every faculty, shall never cease to magnify thy infinite loving Kindness for all the Miracles of Mercy which thou hast been please to work for the Relief of wretched Man. by the Ministry and Mediation of thy dear Son. Rom 4. 25 Who died for our Offences, and roje again for our Justification; and now liveth for ever at thy right Hand making Intercession continually for us: That Son, who joyns with thee in extending the Mercy for which he interceeds, because he is of thee and with thee, the same very and eternal God, Heb 7. 25. which makes him able for ever to fave them that come to thee by bim: That Son, who, even as Man, though in that Re spect inferior to thy Divine Majesty, Matt 28, 18: Phil 2. 10, 11. Hath all Power given to him in Heaven and in Earth; that at the Name of Jefus every Knee Shall bow, of I bings in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to, and in thy Glory, O God the Father. Acts 10, 42. John 5. 22. Colossians 2. 3.

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this is he whom thou hast ordained to be the Judge both of the quick and the dead; for thou thyself judgest no Man, but hast committed all Judgment to thy Son, in whom are hid all the Treasures of

Wildom and Knowledge.

Now he is both the Witness and the Judge: that Judge, and that Witness, whose discerning Eve no guilty Conscience can escape: Heb 4. 12. For all things are naked and open in his fight. Thus he, who did himself submit to a most unrighteous Judgment, Acts 17. 31. Pfal 98. 10. Iball judge the World in Righteoufnels, and the People with equity. I magnify thy holy Name, O Almighty and most merciful God, and from the bostom of my Heart give Glory to thee, for this wonderful Conjunction of the Divine and Human Nature in one Person, that so One might not be God, and Another be Man; but that one and the fame should be God and Man, Man and God. But notwithstanding thy Divine Word did, by a most aftonishing Condescention, suffer himself to be made Flesh, yet both these Natures still remain distinct and yet perfect, and neither was changed into, or swallowed up in the other. There was no addition of a fourth Person to the Trinity by this amazing Dispensation; no Confusion of substance, but an exact Unity so ordered by thy excellent Wisdom, that the Substance taken anew should approach, and be joyned to God; and that of which it could never be said, that it was not, should still continue what it always was.

O marvelous Mystery! O inexplicable Conjunction! O Mercy most Adorable; Ever to be Admired, ever to be Loved ! We were not worthy to be called thy Servants, and thou hast made us Sons; Rom 8. 17. Sons of God not only Sons but Heirs too; Heirs of God and Joynt-heirs with Christ. Whence is that mighty Favour? Who are We, that the King of Heaven should thus delight to Honour us? Nothing alass! and even less than nothing. But fince, O Gracious Father, thou hast been pleased to do so great things for us; I beseech thee, by thy unspeakable Love, to perfect the good Work thou haft begun; and make us fuch as thy many and gracious Promises in Jesus Christ were designed to be Accomplished in. Send down thy Grace and Spirit from above' and let this qualify us to receive the fulness of thy Mercy. Help us to Understand, and confider with Reverence, to contemplate, and with all Diligence, to walk worthy of this Mystery of Godliness; This Son of God I Tim 3. 16. manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in World, received up into Glory

C H A P, XVII.

Of the thanks due to God for the Redemption of the World.

HOW vastly are we indebted to thy Bounty, O Lord, whom thou hast redeemed

with fo precious a Ranfom, faved with fo noble a Gift. honoured with so high a Privilege! What Fear, what Reverence, what Love what Thanks what Praise and Glory ought wretched Sinners to pay to a God; who hath thus pitied, thus loved, thus rescued, thus Sanctified, thus exalted them? The whole of our Ability, the whole of our Knowledge, our very Life and Being is all of it thy just Tribute. But alass! What Ability hath any of us, what can we do, or what indeed are we, which is not thine already? Thou therefore, from whom all good things do come, impart to us, for thy own Name's fake, of thy good Treasure; that of thy own good Gifts we may give back again to Thee; and by thy Grace be enabled toserve and please thee in Faithfulness and Truth, and to render thee due and daily Praise for all thy Works of Mercy, yea, even for the very Power of rendering thee this Praise.

For alas! we are sensible that the very Power of serving and praising thee is entirely thy Gist; Jam 1. 17. Since every good gift, and every perfect gist is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And in this sense we address to thee, O Father Almighty, acknowledging thy Power; O Father of Mercy, depending on thy Goodness; O Lord incomprehensible, addring thy infinite Excellencies; O Maker and Restorer of all things by thy Son Jesus Christ, in considence of thy Love through that sweet Savier

our, whom thou hast vouchfased to send out of hy own bosom for our common Benefit; to take Dur Life, that he might give us His : to be perect Man of the Substance of his Mother, as he s perfect God of the Substance of Thee his Faher; perfect God and perfect Man; but still one Christ, begotten from Eternity, and born in time, mmortal and Mortal, Creator and Creature, trong and Weak, Victor and Vanquished, the Nourisher and the Nourished, the Shepherd and he Sheep, Dead for a Seaton, and yet ever living with Thee: In the Name therefore of this wonerful Person we approach thee, And well we nay, fince He who cannot Lye hath left this Joyul affurance with all that love him, John 16. 23 bat what seever such shall ask the Father in his ame be will not fail to give it them.

Therefore by this Great, this True, this Only perfect High-priest, this Bishop of Souls, who ofered himself a spotless and propitiatory Sacrifice thy Justice; Heb 9 14. By this good shepherd, who laid down his Life for his Sheep; By this Meliator and Redeemer, John 10 11. who sitteth thy right hand making intercission for us: I implore thy Mercy. O most tender Lover of Manind; That Thou, this Son of thine, and thy lessed Spirit, would grant me Grace worthly and constantly to Magnify thy glorious Name, with deep Remorte and Godly Sorrow for my lins; with Humility and plenty of Tears; with rosound Reverence, with Fear and Trembling.

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And for this I intreat the whole Trinity of Persons, who, being all united in the same Substance, must of necessity be joyned in the same Act of giving.

Wisd 9. 15.

But being fadly fenfible with all, that the Spirit within me, how willing foever of itself, is yet weakened and weighed down by this corruptible Body; Ibeg that thou wouldest stirup, and quicken myStupidity; and so actuate this heavy Lump, that I may Vigorously attend to, and Stedfastly persevere in, the ways of thy Commandments, and the proper method of giving thee true Praile Day and Night. Pfal 39. 4. John 6. 44. 14. 6. O let thy Spirit wax bot within me, and in my musings let the boly fire burst out. And in regard thy own Son hath declared, that no Man cometh unto Him except be be drawn of the Father; and again, that no Man cometh to the Father but by bim; Draw me, I most humbly pray thee, continually to Him, that he at last may bring me to thee; Even to those happy Mansions, where he now firs at thy right hand; where there is Life and Blifs everlafting; where joyful Love abounds and Fear is done away · where there is eternal Day and perfect agreement of Souls: Certain Security, and secure Quiet; Pleasure, and exquisite Happiness; happy Eternity and eternal Blessedness, even the ravishing Sight and the never-ceasing Praise of Thee the ever Glorious God. Where Thou, with that Bleffed Son, as does that Bleffed Son with Thee, livest and reignest in the Unity ot

of the same Divine Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen,

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CHAP. XVIII.

A Devout Prayer to Christ.

Lover of Men; Thou Light and Way, thou Life and health, thou Glory and Grace of all that love and serve thee; Look down from the Throne of thy Majesty, and in the midst of Bliss, remember the Injuries and Sufferings, the Scourges and the Cross, the Wounds and Death which thou enduredst; and think with favour on thy Supplicant, for whose sake thou wast pleafed to endure and do so much.

Thou art my living and true God; my holy Father, my gentle and kind Master, my great King, my good Shepherd, my only Teacher, my most ready and effectual Helper, my dearest and most beautiful Spouse; my true and living Bread my everlasting High Priest, my Guide to my own Country, my true Light, my right Way, my best Wisdom, my holy Delight, my unspotted Purity, my Reconciliation and Peace, my sure Defence; my most desirable Portion; my eternal Health; my unbounded Mercy; my invincible Patience; my unblemished Sacrifice, my persect Redemption; my assured Hope, my universal Charity; my Resurrection from the dead my everlasting

verlasting Life, my Joy and beatifick Vision for ever. Of thee I beg that I may walk by thee, come to thee, rest in thee, John 14 6. O thou Way, thou truth, thou Life, without which no Man cometh to the Father. Thou, even thou, art the Blessing my Soul wants, and most earnestly desi-

res, my fweetest, loveliest, only Lord.

O Brightness of thy Father's Glory, who from thy Throne far above the Cherubim, feeft all the Secrets of the Great Deep; Thou true, enliven. ing unexhausted Light, which Angels long to be illuminated with, and spend glad Ages in behold. ing, spring forth into my Soul, and scatter the thick darkness there, that the Brightness of thy love may thine and thed itself through every cor. per of my benighted Heart. Give me thyfelf 0 God, give me thy Love in return, for that I Love thee thou knowelt; and if it be too little, I defire to Love thee more ardently. I cannot make such exact reckoning of my Love, as to know how much I fall short of that affection which I ought to have that to my very Actions and Defire might carry me to thy Embraces, fly to thy Arms, and never cease the pursure of my Lord, till I be hid in the fecret Places of thy Presence. But though I cannot take a precise Measure of my Defects, and how muchbetter I ought to be; yet this I know, and from my own Experience can declare that all without, nay, all befides thee avail me nothing; all about, all within is Desolation and Misery; whatever the the foolish World calls Plenty Plenty is nothing; and all but my God is Pover-

ty, and the very extremity of Want.

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For thou alone art that God, which cannot admit of either Dimunition or Increase; to thee to live and to be happy is the same thing, who art Happiness itself. But thy Creature, with whom these Things may be separated, and who may either not live, or live and be unhappy, ought to ascribe the whole Benefit of both Life and Happiness to thy Soul Gift and Favour, Hence it is that we stand in continual need of thee, but thou hast none of us: For if we had no Being at all, that would not lessen in any Degree that Happiness, which is inseparable from thy Being. It is therefore absolutely necessary for us to cleave stedfastly to the Lord our God, that by thy continual affistance, we may be enabled to live Tit 2. 12. Soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present World. For this load of Flesh and Frailty cumbers and drags us down, but the Gifts of thy Spirit are a happy counterpoize to this heavy Clog. By this we feel the fluggish Mass warm'd and put into Motion; we rife and mount upwards in Heart and Mind; We fing Songs of Degrees, and inflamed with thy Divine Fire, burn with holy Zeal and foar aloft successfully.

But whither is it, that these Flights would carry us? Even to the Peace of Jerusalem, According to that of the Psalmist Psal 122. 1. I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House of the Lord. There hath his Goodness pre-

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pared a Place for us, that the fum of our Wishes and Defires should be to set up our Rest there for ever. For, in regard 2 Cor 5. 6, we are absent from the Lord, during the time of our sojourning in this Tabernacle of the Body, Heb 13 4. we have (it is manifest) we have no continuing City bere, but are seeking one to come; We lodge in a moveable Tent, Phil 3. 20. and are Travellers and Strangers in a forreign Land, but we are free Denizens of Heaven, and our Home, and all our Priviledges and Properties are there. I will therefore move under the Conduct of thy Grace; I will retire into the Closet of my Heart, and entertain my Soul with Songs of-Love to Thee, my King and my God; with tender Sighs and Groanings which cannot be uttered; in the House of my Pilgrimage, which the Contemplation of thy Righteousness shall soften, while it is made the Subject of my Joy and Praise.

And can I think upon Jerusalem, without stretching forwards all the Desires of my Soul to that Region of Bliss? Jerusalem, the Country, the common Mother of us all; and Thee my God that reignest there in Glory; Psal 4. 26. the Light of that holy City, the Father and Desender, the Governor and the Shepherd; the chaste, but exquisite Delights that abound there; the substantial Joy, and all the unspeakable Felicities united in Thee, who art the true, the supream, the only Felicity of thy People. O Let me not, I besech thee, turn back, or go out of the way, but proceed continually

continually in my affections till thou at last bring my whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, into the peaceful Mansions, where my Heart is already fixed: Rom 8. 23. The first Fruits of the Spirit I already tast, impart to me the whole Lump, and satiate my Soul with the Joys which I now anticipate. Collect my scatter'd Thoughts, and take off the Blemishes and Deformities of my present Frailties, till thou hast wrought me up to a Resemblance of thy Beauty, and establish'd me for ever in the Glories of thy blessed presence, O God of my Mercy.

C H A P, XIX.

The Souls of the Righteous are the House of God.

THIS House of thine, my God, is not built of Earthly, nor of any such Heavenly, but Corporial Matter, as the Orbs above are formed of; but is Spiritual and Eternal; without Flaw or Decay. Psal 148. 6. For thou hast set it fast for ever and ever, and founded it upon a decree which shall not be broken. Thou hast given it a Duration equal to thy own, and End it shall have none, though it had a Begining. Ecles 24. 1. For Wisdom was Created in the beginning. Not the Essential Wisdom, coeternal with the Father, John 1.

3. by whom all things were made, but that which is created but Spiritual Substance, the Rational and Intellectual Mind, which is Light by the Contemplation

Contemplation of Light, and in a qualified Sense stilled Wisdom, though it be finite and created. But, as there is a mighty Difference between Original Light and that which is derived from, and caused by the Reflection of it; so is there between Thee the uncreated Wisdom, and that which is thy Creature and thy Image. Thus also we distinguish between the Righteousness which justifies, (the righteousness of God) and that which is attributed to the Persons justified by it: In which last Sense the Apostle says 2 Cor 5. 21. we are made the Righteousness of God, in Thee, his Son our Lord.

The Ground of which Distinction lies in this. that the first of all these Creatures was Wildom. that rational Power, of which thy City confifts, which is above; and free, the chaft Mother of us all, for ever in the Heavens, even in that Heaven of Heavens which continually praises God, and is to him the Heaven of Heavens indeed. And tho' we can affign no point of Time, antecedent to this noble Wormanship of thine, which had a being before Time itself was; Yet thou the Eternal Creator art before it, and from thee it derives its Eternity, and its beginning. It is therefore of Thee in such a manner, as to be a Substance distinct from Thee: It is qualified to dehold thy Face always, and never to be deprived of that bleffed Vition. In this respect it undergoes no Change; and yet it is liable to change; for this Light may grow dim and cold, if not fed and kept bright

by the Fire of fervent Love, which when well cherished, conveys into a Heat and Lustre, clear-

er and warmer than the Noon-day Sun.

By this most holy Love it is so closely united to Thee, the True, the Eternal God, that though it be not of the same Eternity from the Beginning; yet no Length of future Time, no Change of Fortune or Affairs, shall ever dissolve or loofen it; but it shall rest and be employed for ever in the ravishing Contemplations of thy divine Excellencies. For Thou, O God art bountiful to all that love thee; and wilt reveal thy felf to fuch as seek thee, in measures large as their Capacities admit, or at least as their Necessities require, This keeps thy Servants steady to Thee and to Themfelves. This preserves the Soul in the same happy State, while its Eyes are ever intent, its Affections ever fixed upon thee: while it beholds. and loves and delights in that God, who is true Light, and pure Love. O Bleffed noble Creature the first and best of all the Works of God; but then most bleffed, when dwelling upon thy Master's Blessed Perfections; then happy beyond all Expressions, when entertaining that Divine Inhabitant, and illustrated with the enlivening Beams of that Glorious Spring of Light from on high !

What can I suppose deserves that magnificent' Name The Heaven of Heavens? What can be esteemed the highest and most beloved Habitation of God, rather than this Spiritual House; the Purity and Zeal of a Mind at unity in itself, al-

ways transported with the Pleafure of beholding the divine Glory; always enamoured with God, without admitting any Rival, any partner in its Love, this is the Rock on which bleffed Spi its are built, These the heavenly Satisfactions in hea. venly Places: This the foretast of future Joys. and the affurance of every way fareing Soul, that though it fojourn at present in a strange Land, and at a great Distance from thee; yet if it thirst and pant after thee, if its Godly Tears are its Meat Day and Night, if the dwelling thus above hereafter all the Days of its Life be its constant Wish and Endeavour, its Longing shall one day be fatisfied with the Pleasures of thy House, and all its pious Mournings turned into Joy. From this Blisthen and the Duration of their own, let our Souls raise themselves to form such Ideas of thine, as their present Condition can receive. For what Notion must we have of this Blessedness and how vast is thy Eternity, when even this created House of thine, when keeping at home with thee, though it partake not of the same unbounded Eternity, yet by its Union with its Glorious Maker and Inhabitant, stands proof against all Chance of Time; and persevering by the gracious Influences, is firm notwithstanding the Possibility of Change, which it is subject to: Secured by thy Presence, and by its own constant Affection, and those liberal Communications of thy Grace, which it drinks in, and feasts upon continually? It looks at nothing beyond Thee, as a future Addition to its

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to Happiness; it is afflicted with no troubleome Remembrances of any thing past, which hould embitter or lessen the present. But is enirely blest with the Enjoyment of that God, who hath in mercy made it like himself, and knit it to himself with the strongest Cement of inviolable Love, and such a Fulness of Satisfaction, as neither suffers nor defires a Change.

CHAP. XX.

The Pious Soul's Longing for Heaven.
Pfal 26, 8.

Ord! how have I lov'd the habitation of thy bouse, and the place where thine bonour dwelleth! O Glorious Seat! the Residence and the Workmanship of the Great, the Mighty God; Let me continue, let me increase in this Love of thee more and more, Let this weary Pilgrimage be spent in advancing daily towards thee, and may the gasping of my Soul after thee, sanctify and comfort the Labours of each Day, and refresh my waking thoughts by Night. Matth 6. 20. Let my Heart be always where my treasure is already: And in this dry and desolate Wilderness, may I feel no other Thirst, than that of ariving at my Heavenly Canaan, and partaking in the Society and the Joys of that Psal 14. 15. happy people who have the Lord for their God. O may that God who made both Me and Thee, possess me in Thee! Not that Idare presume to hope for thy

thy Beauty and Bliss, upon the account of any Desert of my own; but yet the humblest Sense of my own Unworthiness will not sink me into Despair of it, when Irestect upon the Blood of Him, who died to purchase this Mansion for me. Let but his Merits be ascribed to me; let his Intercession assist my want of worth, and then I am safe; for those Merits cannot be over balanced by my Sins, nor were, nor those Prayers be offer-

ed up to God in vain-

For my own part I confess with shame and Sorrow Pial 119. 136. that I have gone aftray like a Sheep that is Loft, drawn out of my Wandrings and my Miseries to a great length, and am cast out of the Sight of my God into the Blindness and Darkness of a spiritual Banishment. In this forlorn Estate I sadly bewail the Wretchedness of my Captivity, and fing mournful Songs when I remember thee, O Ferulalem. As yet I am at an uncomfortable Distance, and at best my Feet stand only in the outward Courts of Sion. Beauties of the Sanctuary are behind the Veil, and kept hid from my longing Eyes: But I am full of Hope, that the Builder of this Sanctuary, and the gracious Shepherd of Souls, will carry me in upon his Shoulders; that I may there rejoice with Gladness unspeakable: which all those happy Saints feel, who are already admitted into the Presence of their God and Saviour. The Saviour who hath opened this Royal Palace to all Believers, Ephel 2. 15. 16. Colol 1. 20. by abolishing

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ing the enmity in the flesh, and reconciling allthings in beaven and earth by his own blood. Ephel. 2. 15. For be is our peace, who bath made both one; and broken down the middle wall of partition, promifing to give us the same degree of Happiness in his own due time, which is already enjoyed by, and in, Thee. Luke 20. 35: 36. For thus he hath declared, that They who are worthy to obtain that world and the resurration from the dead, shall be equal unto the Angels. O Jerusalem, the Eternal Habitation of the Eternal God, may'st thou be the fecond Darling of my Soul, and only He be preferr'd before thee in my affection, who shed his Blood to make me worthy of thee. Be thou the Joy and Comfort of my languishing Mind, my great Support in Hardships and Distresses; May the Remembrance of thee be ever sweet, and the Mention of thy Name a holy Charm, to drive away all Sorrow from my Soul.

CHAP. XXI.

The Miseries of the present Life

Contemplations of a future State, fince This in which I now am yields me no Diversion, no Satisfaction at all; but is a painfull and wearifome, a foul and tedious Journey; a wretched, decaying, and uncertain Life. A Life of Labour, and, which is worse, a Life of Sin, and Pride and Folly.

Folly. Full of Miseries and Errors, and rather Death than Life; since in it we die daily, by the constant Decays and Alterations of our Bodies, and the sundry kinds of Death to which we stand

every moment exposed.

And can we in any Propriety of Speech call this Living? Does that empty thing deserve the Name of Life, which is bloated with Tumours, macerated with Pains, burnt up with Fevers, blafted by an intected Air; fattened with Eating. brought down with Fasting; enervated with Mirch, confumed with Melancholy; shortened with Care, stupissed with Security; blown up with Riches. dejected by Poverty; made gay by Youth, bowed down with Age; broken with Infirmities, and destroyed with Griefs? Nay, as if all these Evils were too little, the Conclusion of them all is the Tyranny of Death, which puts a speedy Period to what we fallely call the Joys of Life, and abolishes them, and wears out all the Footsteps and Remembrances of them fo utterly, that it is from thenceforth, as if they had never been at all.

And yet it is prodigious to consider, how this strange Mixture, for which we know not well how to find a Name, this Living Death, or DyingLife, though in every Part embittered by these and infinite other Miseries, how it imposes, I say, upon the generality of Mankind, and cheats them with lying Promises of imaginary Happiness. Nay, though the Cheat be so gross, that the blindest

blindest of its Admirers cannot but discover it; and the Portion so nauseous that the most stupid cannot but loath and be sick of it; yet still infinite are the Fools that drink large draughts of its Cup, and are intoxicated with the bewitching Liquor, But happy are those few, those very few, who wisely keep their distance, and will not trust themselves in its treacherous Embraces; who despise its vain superficial Joys, and will have nothing to do with its flattering Allurements, for fear at last it prove their sate, to have the Deceiver and the Deceived perish together.

CHAP. XXII.

The Happiness of that Life prepared for them that love God.

BUT, O ! that Life, which God hath laid up in store for them that love him! That Life indeed! That happy, secure, serene and most amiable, that Pure and Holy Life; That Life, which sears no Death, seels no Sorrow, which knows no Sin, which languishes under nor is distracted with no Care, is russed with no Passion, lies at the Mercy of no Accidents; That incorruptible that unchangeable Life, which hath every thing that can attract yea and draw our Affections, and command our Esteem. There will be no Enemies to assault us, no Envy to undermine us, no Temptation to seduce us, no Fears to confound

found us; but perfect Love and Harmony of Souls; a Day that never declines, a light that never goes out; there we shall see God face to face, Pfal 17.

15. And when we awake up after his likeness, our

Souls Shall be satisfied with it.

Olet me indulge this delightful Thought, and run over all thy Beauties and Blifs with an unwearied Defire! For the more I confider, the more Passionately fond I grow of Thee, and feel no Pleasure comparable to the sweet Reflections upon, and impatient Thirstings after thee. Here will I dwell, for I have unspeakable Delights therein. Upon this will I fix my Eyes, my Heart, my Studies; to thee will I direct all my Defires, and conform all my Dispositions. This Subject let me speak and hear of continually, let it be my Theme to write upon, my Entertainment in Conversation. I will spend my private Hours in reading of its Bliffes and Glories, I will meditate frequently upon what I have read of it; that thus, at least I may find some Refreshment, some Loose, from the Miseries, and Toyls, and Incumbrances, of a troublesome perishing Life; and, at last, recline my weary Head, and lay me down to fleep with Joy, when the Bleffedness of this Life, truly so called, immediately commence upon my waking.

This makes me walk with such Delights in the pleasant Gardens of the Holy Scriptures; here I am diligent to gather the Flowers of God's Word and Promises; I devour them by reading, I chew the

the Cud upon them by frequent Recollection; I lay them up in my Memory as a most Valuable Treasure, and by tasting and feeding upon these delicious Descriptions of another World, I take off great part of the bitter and nauseousness of this World.

O happy State! O truly glorious Kingdom! without Succession, without Conclusion! Where Time is no longer measured by the Revolutions of Days and Nights, Summers and Winters; but Eternity is continued through one endless Day, one ever blooming Spring. Where they, who have been victorious in their spiritual Warfare, joyn in Confort with the Bleffed Angels, and fing the fongs of Sion without ceasing. There a neverfading Crown adorns every Head, and exquifite Joy over-flows every Heart ! O when will it please God to give me leave to lay down this Load and Lumber of Flesh, and admit me without Spot or Corruption into the true Rest, the transporting Delights of that Blisful Place ! That I may Pial 48. 8. Walk about the beauteous walls of the City of God, view all ber Palaces, and receive a Crown at the Hands of my merciful Judge. When shall I make one in that holy Choir, and behold the Majestick Presence of my Maker, with the Spirits of Just Men made perfect? When shall I see my dear Redeemer face to face, and approach that unspeakably bright, and as yet inaccessible Light, which flows from the Sun of Righteoufness? When, O when, shall I be freed from that Bondage Bondage of the Fear of Death, and possess the uninterupted Joy of an endless incorruptible State, conferred upon me by the bounty of my God!

CHAP, XXIII.

The Happiness of Holy Souls at their Departure out of this World.

longer merideed by the Revolutions TAppy the Soul, which, refined from this Drofs of Earth, and got loofe from its Incumbrance of a Body, foars up to Heaven and takes up its Dwelling there, secure from any future Affaults, and triumphant over Death. Then does it feast upon the beauteous Face of that dear Lord, whom it ferv'd, and lov'd, and longed to enjoy, in that Glory and glad Immortality to which it is at last arrived. AGlory and Gladness which no Length of Time will wear out, no envious Advertary can take away. Cant 6. 9. 8,5. This is the Spoule, which the Daughters faw and bleffed her; the Queens and the Concubines, and they praised ber. Who is this that cometh up from the Wilderness leaning upon her beloved? who is she that goeth up as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners? With what eager Joy does the fly to the Arms of her Lord, when with a joyful Astonishment she hears the Voice of his most affectionate Call; Cantic 2. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Rife up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

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for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and one. the flowers appear on the earth, the time of nging is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard n our land, the fig-treeputeth forth her green figs, nd the Vines with the tender grapes give a good mell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away my dove, that art in the clifts of the rocks n the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy ountenance, let me bear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Come, my Chosen, my fair One, my Dove, my Spouse, and will receive thee into my Throne, for I have onged for thy Beauty. Come and rejoice before ne with the Angels, to whom I have promifed to make thee a Companion. Come, after long Toils nd many Dangers, Matth 25. 53. John 16. 22. and enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, a joy which no Man taketh from thee.

CHAP, XXIV.

A Prayer for Succour in Trouble and Danger.

B Lessed are all thy Saints, my God and King who have travelled over the tempestuous Sea of Mortality, and have at last made the desired Port, of Peace and Felicity; tearless of suture Hazards, and tull of perpetual Joy. This Sea, thou, my Saviour, didst condescend to my and be tost upon. O cast a gracious Eye upon us who are still in our dangerous Voyage. Thou are possest

possest of never-sading Glory, but do not, in the midst of thy own Happiness, forget those who are beset with vast Variety of Miseries. Thou hast chosen us to thyself, and what we are or hope to be, is all thy Gist; thou hast promised to make us Immortal with and by thyself, and to bestow upon us the everlasting Felicity of thy Presence O remember and succour us in our Distress, and think on them who lie exposed to the rough

Storms of Troubles and Temptations.

Thou art the beautiful Gate of Heaven, John 10. 9. the Door at which the Sheep must Enter; but we alas! Lie groveling here below, and our Soul cleaveth to the duft. Stretch forth thy Hand and raise us up; Strengthen our Weakness that we may do Valiently in this spiritual War, who of ourselves are not able to stand against the mighty Force that comes against us. Help us against our Enemies Power; help us against our Negligence and Cowardice; and defend us from the Trechery of our own unfaithful Hearts. We are exceeding frail, exceeding weak and despicable, Slaves to intemperance and Lust, and indisposed to every virtuous and gallant Undertaking. And yet, helpless Wretches as we are, when listed under thy Banner, and born up by thy Cross, we are buoy'd up in Faith, and commit ourselves boldly to this Pial 25. 26. Great and wide Sea, roberein are things creeping innumerable, both Small and great beafts, where is the Leviathan, that Serpent ready to devour; wherein are Rocks andQuickfands and otherDangers without number, on which the careless and the Unbelieving run their Vessel, and suffer Shipwrack daily.

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Intercede for me therefore, most gracious Saviour, that, by thy Powerful Mediation and all-sufficient Merits, I may be able to bring this Vessel and its Lading safe to Shore; and be conducted to the Haven where every pious Soul would be, the Haven of Peace and Salvation, of uninterrupted Rest, and never-ending Joy.

CHAP. XXV.

The Pious Soul's Defire of Heaven.

Heavenly Jerusalem! Our common Mother, the Holy City of God, thou beautiful Spouse of Christ, my Soul hath loved thee exceedingly, and all my Faculties are ravished with thy charms. O what Graces, what Glory, what noble State appears in every Part of thee! Most exquisite is thy Form, and thou alone art Beauty without Blemish. Rejoice and dance for Joy, O Daughter of my King, for thy Lord himself, fairer than all the Sons of Men, hath Pleasure in thy beauty.

Psal 45. 11. Cantic 5. 9. 10

But what is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. Cantic 2.3, I sat down

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under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit

was freet to my tafte.

By night on my bed I fought him whom my Soul loveth, I fought him and found him. I hold him fast and will not let him go, till he bring me into his House, into the secret Places of his Tabernacles. O glorious Metropolis; there shalt thou give thy Children thy Breast, and so fill me with the plentiful Communication of thy Pleasures, that I shall never hunger more, neither thirst any more.

O how happy will my Soul perceive itself, when it shall be admitted to see thy Glory, thy Beauty; to view the Gates, the Walls, the Streets the stately Buildings, the splendor of thy Inhabitants, and the triumphant Pomp of thy King inthroaned in the midst of thee! For thy Walls are of precious Stones, and thy Gates of Pearl, and thy Streets of pure Gold, continually refounding with loud Hallelujahs. Thy Houses are sounded upon hewn square Stones, carried up with Saphire, covered in with Gold, and no unclean Person can enter into thee, no manner of Pollution abide within thy Borders.

Mother of us all. Subject to none of those Vicissistudes and Interruptions, which abate our Pleasures here below. No Successions of Night and Day, no Intervals of Darkness no Difference of Seatons, in their several Courses. Nor is the Light derived from artificial Helps, or natural Luminaries, the

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fame with ours; Rev 21 23. no Lamps or Candles, no shining of the Moon or Stars, but God of God, and Light of Light, even the Sun of Righteousness shines in thee; and the white Immaculate Lamb, he it is that enlightens thee with the full Lustre of his Majesty and Beauty. Thy Light and Glory, and all thy Happiness is the incessent Contemplation of this divine King; for this King of Kings is in the midst of thee, and all his Host are ministring round adout him continually.

There are the melodious Choirs of Angels there the sweet Fellowship and Company of the heavenly Inhabitants; there the joyful Pomp of all those triumphant Souls who from their fore Trials and Travels through this Vally of Tears, at last return victorious to their native Country. There the Goodly Fellowship of Prophets, whose Eyes God opened to take a Prospect of far distantMysteries. There the twelve Leaders of the Christian Armies, the bleffed Apostles; there the noble Army of Martyrs, there the Convention of Confessors; there the Holy Men and Women, who in the Days of their Flesh were mortified to the Pleasures of Sin and the World; there the Virgins and the Youths, whose blooming Virtues put out early Fruit, and ripen'd in Piety far exceeding the Proportion of their Years. There the Sheep and Lambs, who have escaped the ravening Wolf, and all the Snares laid for their Destruction. These all rejoice in their proper Mansions; and though each differ from other in Degrees of Glory, yet

all agree in Bliss and Joy, diffused to all in common; and the Happiness of every one is esteem'd each Man's own.

For there Charity reigns in its utmost Perfection, because God there is all in all. Whom they continually behold, and beholding continually admire, and praise and love, and love and praise without Intermission, without End without Weariness, or Distraction of Thought. This is their constant, their Delightful Employments. And O? how happy shall I be, how exquisitely, how incessantly happy, if when this Body crumbles into Dust, I shall be entertained with that Celestial Harmony, and hear the Hymns of Praise to their eternal King, with Troops of Angels and Saints innumerable are ever finging in full Confort? How happy myself to bear a Part with them, and pay the same Tribute to my God and Saviour, the Author and Captain of my Salvation ! To behold his Face in Glory, and be made Partaker of those gracious. Promises, of which he hath given me the comfortable Hope, when faying to his Father, John 17. 5. 24. I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And again, supporting his Disciples against the Tribulations rhey should encounter here below, xii. 26. xiv. 21. If any man love me let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my fervant be. And in another Place, He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father,

ther, and I will love bim, and will manifest my-

CHAP, XXVI.

An Act of Praise.

Psal 103. 1. 22.

DLess the Lord, Omy Soul, and all that is within me bless bis boly Name. Bless the Lord Omy Soul, and forget not all his benefits. OPraise the Lord all ye Works of bis, in a!l Places of bis Dominions: Praise the Lord, O my Soul. Let us magnify that great God, whom Angels Praise, whom Dominions adore, whom Powers fall down and tremble before; whose excellentGlory Cherubin and Seraphin proclaim with loud incessant Voices: Let us then bear a part too in this heavenly Song, and together with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of heaven. laud and magnify that glorious name; Let us tune our Voices up by theirs, and though we cannot reach their pitch, yet will we exert the utmost of our Skill and Power, in this tribute to the same common Lord, and say with them, as poor Mortals are able, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hoft; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory; Glory be to thee, O Lord most bigh.

For these are the happy Spirits, who offer a Sacrifice of pure Praise before the Throne of God continually; who are ever rapt in the Contemplation of his Persections; and see them not like

us, 1 Cor 13. through a glass darkly, but near at hand, and face to face. What Tongue can express, what Thought conceive, the admirable Beauty, the exact Order, the numberless Multitude of this heavenly Hoft? The inexhaustible Source of Joy springing from the beatifick Vision, the frequent Love, which ministers Delight without Torment; the Ever-growing Defire. which rifes with their Satisfactions, and the grateful Satisfactions which crown that Desir; A Defire always eager and never uneasy, al ways full and never cloved : The Bleffedness derived down to them, by their inseparable Union to the Fountain of all Bliss; the Light communicated to them from the original Light; the happy change into an immutable Nature, 1 John 2 3. by feeing the immutableGod as he is, and being transformed into the Likeness of him they see?

But how, alas! should we hope to comprehend the Divinity, and Bliss of Angels so far above us, when we feel ourselves unable to find out the Nature and Perfections of this very Soul within us? What sort of Being must this be, which inspires a Lump of dead Flesh with Life and Activity, and yet, when most desirous so to do, cannot confine its Thoughts to holy Exercises? What a mixture of Power and Impotence is here? How great, and yet how poor and little is this Principle, which dives into the Secrets of the Most High, searches the deep Things of God, and Expands itself to celestial Objects, at the

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fame time that it is forced to imploy its Talent in the Invention of useful Arts, and to serve the necessities of a mortal Life? What fort of Creature is this, that knows fo much of other Things, and so little of itselt? So injenious in Matters abroad, so perfectly in the dark to what is done at home? Specious but very disputable Noteons have indeed been advanced concerning the Otigin of our Soul, but all we know of it amounts at last to this, that it is an intellectual Spirit, created by the Almighty Power of its divine Maker, endued with fuch an Immortality, as he was pleased to quality it for; enlivening sustaining a Body subject to Change, Corruption, and Death, and liable to all the unequal Affections of Fear and Joy, and turbulent Passion, that in their Turns exalt and depress, enlarge or correct its Powers.

And what an amazing Thing is this now? The more we attend to it, the more we shall find ourselves lost in wonder. When we read, or speak or write of God, the Great Creator of the Universe, we can deliver ourselves clearly and distinctly, though at the same time his Perfections be too vast for our Words to express, or our Minds to comprehend; the Subject, not of an adequat Conception, but of an awful Astonishment. But when we descend lower, and treat of Angels and created Spirits, of Souls united to Bodies, and Beings of the same level with, or a Condition inferior to. our own; we are not able to support our Ideas with Proofs so uncontestable, and find it im-

practicable

practicable to fatisfy ourselves or others in the Enquiries concerning them. Why then should we, to fo very little purpose, hover uncertainly a bout these lower Regions, and spend our Time and Pains in groping in the dark? No, let our Minds rather enlarge their Thoughts, and take a nobler Range: Let them leave all created Objects behind, and run, and mount, and fly aloft . And, take Faith to the affistance of Reason, fix their Eyes with the utmost Intenseness our Nature will bear, upon the Creator, the Universal Cause. Yes, I will make a Ladder, like that of Jacob's, Gen. 28. 12. Reaching from Earth to Heaven, and, as by rounds, go up from my Body to my Soul, from my own Soul to that Eternal Spirit that made it; who fustains, preserves, is always with me, about me, above me; thus skipping over all the intermediate Stages of Beings, and re-uniting my own Soul to Him, from whom it came, and in whose Image it was created.

What bodily Eyes can discern, whatever leaves Impressions upon my imaginative Faculty, shall be resolutely set out of the Way, as a hindrance to that more abstracted Contemplation, which my Mind is desirous to indulge. A pure and simple Act of the Understanding is that, which must carry me up, and boldly soar at once, to the Creator of Angels, and Souls, and all Things. And happy that Soul, which, refusing to be detained by low and viler Objects, directs its Flight to the noblest and most exalted; and like the Eagle,

gle, builds its Nest in the top of the Rocks, and keeps his Eye steady upon the Sun of Righteoutness. For no beauty is to charming, no Pleafure fo transporting as that, with which our Eyes and Minds are frafted when our greedy Sight and eager Affections are determin'd to our God and Saviour, as to their only proper Center: When, by a wonderous mystical, but true and spiritual Act of Vision, we see Him who is invifible; behold a Light far different from this which cheers our Senses, and taste a Pleasure infinitely sweeter than any this World and its Joys can afford. For this is a short and unsincere Pleafure: This is a dim and feeble Light; confined to a narrow Space, always in Motion from us, and in few Hours put out by constant Returns of Darkness: These are Enjoyments which the Great Creator hath distributed to Brutes. nay, to the vilest of Infects, in common with Mankind. And therefore let us thirst and aspire after such as are truly human. For what even Swine and Worms share with us, cannot deserve the Name of Light and Pleasure, but in comparison of those more refined, are to be esteemed no better than Pain and Night.

CHAP. XXVII. Lands died

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His Supreme and Immutable Being, this Glorious Sun that never fets, this True, Unclouded, and Eternal Light, the Light of Angels and Men, cannot indeed be feen with mortal Eyes, nor must we hope in this Life to approach it, That Bleffing is referved for glorified Saints in Heaven; and therein chiefly does the Excellence of their Reward and Happiness consist. But yet are we not even now shut out from all Perception of it neither. For to believe in, to meditate upon, to understand, and ardently to thirst after God, to make him the fole Object of our Thoughts and Defires, This is in some sense to see, and to possess him. And since our Capacity extends thus far at present, let us exert those little Powers we have! Let our Voices be lifted up on high, and our Souls make God their Study, and let us, to the best of our Ability, entertain him with his own Praises. For it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that the Creature should publish the Goodness of the Creator; fince He created us for the Illustration of his own Glory. Though it be the Perfection of his Happiness, not to stand in need of any Glory we can give him, nor can we add to what he hath already.

For He is Power incomprehensible, possessing all things, and self-sufficient. Psal. 47.7 145. 3. Great is our Lord, and great is his power, yea, and his wisdom is infinite. Great is our Lord and marvellous, and worthy to be praised. Let this then

be the Object of our Love, This the subject of our Song, This the ground of our Labours and Studies. And let our Mind and Tongue, and Hands, be continually exercised in defiring, speaking, singing, writing of Him Let the Delights of this heavenly Rhetorick be our daily Food and Feast, that filled with this divine Nourishment, we may cry out with the most earnest Contention of Heart and Voice, with Joy and Gladness, and most servent Zeal, and proclaim the Excellencies of our God after the following manner.

CHAP. XXVIII.

MOST Great, most Gracious, most Mighty, most Just, most Merciful, Omnipresent and Incomprehensible Lord God; thou are invisible and yet seest allthings, Unchangable and yet chang able, and changest all things, Immortal, Uncircumscribed, without Bounds, without End, unspeakable, unsearchable; unmoved, and giving Motion to all things; fearful and glorious; to be honoured, and reverenced, and adored with the most Humility; never new, never old; and yet making all things new, and consuming their gayest Pride with Age, though they regard it not.

Always in Action, and yet always at Rest, sustaining all things, and yet seeling no burden; filling all things, and yet included in nothing; creating, protecting, nourishing, maintaining, improving ving all things: Thou seekest and yet thou lackes est not; thou lovest without Passion, art jealous without Disturbance; thou repentest without Remorse; art angry without Perturbation; changest thy Works but not thy Resolution; thou receivest what thou hadst never lost, art never poor and yet rejoicest in the gaining of Sinners; art not covetous, and yet Matt 25 27. Expectest thy own with usery; and art pleased to account thy self a Debtor to them who do good for thy take.

But, who alas can do? Who is possessed of anyGood, which is not thine already? Thou payest Debts and yet owest nothing; thou forgivest Debts, and art no Loser by thy Mercy: Thou givest Life and Being to all; art every where, and in all; thou may'st be felt and perceived, but not feen; art distant from no Place, and yet far from the Ungodly: For where thou are not by thy Grace and Favour, thou still art present by thy Observation and Vengance. Thou communicatest thyself to all, but not to all equally. To some things thou impartest Being, but not Life, or Sense, or Understanding. To some Being and Life but not Sense and Understanding. To some again, Being and Life and Sense, but not Understanding. To some, lastly, thy Bounty extends so far, as to bestow all these. And, though thou always be the same perfectly confistant with thyself; yet nothing is more different than that vast Varicty of Gifts and Dispensations, wherein thy diffe--tcut

rentInfluences are thed abroad upon different forts of Creatures.

We are in continual Pursuit of thee, and though thou move not away from us, yet can we not apprehend thee. Thou possesses all things, compassest all, surmountest all, upholdest all, yet dost not so uphold all, as to have any thing above thee; not fo fill all, as to have any thing without thee; but at once fillest and containest, sustainest and furmountest all.

Thou teachest the Hearts of the faithful without the formality of Words, and speakest to them without the Noise of articulate Sounds. Wild 8. I. Thy Wisdom reacheth from one end to theother mightily, and sweetly doth she order all things. Thou art neither enlarged with any Addition of Space, nor changed by any Revolution of Time. Thou inhabitest the Light which no Man can approach invisible because strictly and simply One, and having no Parts, fillest all things with the whole of thy Self.

Finite Minds cannot distinctly conceive, nor artful Expressions declare, nor whole Volumes and Libraries explain the Depths and Intricacies of this Mystery. For what can describe that Greatness, which is above all Quantity; and that transcendent Goodness, which is above all Quality? This is perfect Goodness indeed; and therefore none is truely Good, but Thou alone; with whom to intend is to finish, and to will is to be

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Thou madest all things out of nothing, meerly because it was thy good pleasure so to do. Thou possesses all things, not because thou needest any; Thou governest all without Care or Toil; and nothing in Heaven above, or in Earth, no not in Hell beneath, hath power to countermand, or in any degree to disturb thy regular Management, or break the beautious Order of thy

Universe. Thou art not the Author of any Evil: This is what even that Power, which can do all things, cannot do. For the being able to do this would argue a Defect' and not a Perfection, of Power, Nor canst thou repent of any thing thou hast done, because thy Wildom always does the best; Nor canst thou be disorder'd with any tumultuous Paffions, for these are the Tempests and Commotions of weak Minds; Nor could the Danger or Ruin of the whole World be any Detriment to Thee, for that were to have a Happiness depending on thy own Creatures; Nor canst thou approve or commend any wicked Action, for that were a Blemish to thy Holiness, and would make thee cease to be God.

Thou never Lyest, because thou art Eternal Truth: By thy Bounty alone we were created, by thy Justice we are punished for our Offences, and by thy Clemency are Delivered from Vengance and Destruction. No material Being whether Earthly or Heavenly Body, No ActivePrinciple, (not even that of Fire) which can affect

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our Senses, ought to be worshipped for thee : For Thou alone haft Self-existance, and never changest from what thou art. Hence is thy Name Jehovah, Exod 3. 14. Psal 102. 27. denoting that thou art always the same, and thy years shall not fail. These and many other necessary and saving Truths thy Church hath taught me, of which I acknowledge it thy special Favour to have been made a Member. For here I learnt, that Thou art the One, the True God, without Body, Parts, or Passions; and that no part of thy Substance is capable of Change or Corruption, compounded or made. This makes it evident, that no bodily Eye can discern thee, and that no Mortal can see thee in thy proper Essence: Hence it is also plain, that from the same Cause, which enables Angels to behold thee now, we also after this Life shall be enabled to behold thee. But even those glorious and intelectual Spirits cannot see thee in all Points as thou art; for thy mysterious Unity of Essence in Trinity of Perfons, as it hath nothing like itself, so it is comprehended by nothing but itself.

CHAP, XXIX.

Of the Plurality of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Effence.

Hou, my God, art but One with regard to thy Nature, but the Persons to whom this Nature

Nature is communicated are several: And thus in different respects, Thou art capable and incapable, of becoming the Object of Number, and Measure, and Weight. We do not acknowledge any Begining of that Goodness, whereof thy Essence confists; but believe all things whatsoever to be from, and by, and in This; and that there is no other thing Good, except so far as it participates of and receives its Goodness from Thee, Thy Divine Essence is, and ever was without Matter, but not without Form : The perfect, most beautiful, and true original Form : Which, like thy Seal, thou fealest upon every thing, and fill, without Addition or Diminution to thy felf, diverfisiest thy own Works after a wonderful manner, and makest them to differ from Thee, and from Each other, according to the different Characters impressed upon them by their Maker's Hand, For whatfoever is made, is made by thee alone.

O Lord Omnipotent, Thou great Three One, whole Almighty Power possesses, governs, and fills all things; yet so, as that the Greatest hath not more, nor the Least less, but so as to be all in all, and all to be in Thee: As it is written, Psal. 139. 7, 8. 9. 10. Whither shall Igo from thy Spirit, and wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up to heaven, thou art there: if I go down to bell, thou art there also; If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall thy hand lead me.

me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Thus art thou present with every thing, and every thing with Thee; not by any local Extension, but by thy Virtue, and Power, and Communication of

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Now, fince thy Nature is fimply and inseparably One, we must not so conceive of thy Trinity, as if the Persons in it could be really separatfrom one another, This is indeed diftinguished into Three, and each Person hath a different Name and Title; but fill no Name belongs to any one of them, which does not at the same time refer to the reft, according to the different Properties and mutualRelations of each to other. The Farher includes the Notion of a Son; The Son that of a Father; The Holy Spirit Father and Son both And all those Titles used to express the Power and Essence, and Perfections. and whatever is included in the Name of God. belongs to every Person equally. There is not therefore any thing which may be truly affirmed of the Father as God, but may with equal Truth be affirmed of the Son, or Holy Choft, as God. We say that the Father is God by Nature, fo we say likewise that the Son, and the Holy Ghost are; and yet they are not Three Gods by Nature, but Father, Son, and Holy Ghoft, One and the felf-same God.

So that our Understanding embraces but One undivided Essence, though, for our more distinct Conception of this Essence, we distinguish the se-

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veral Subfistencies in it, by calling them different Persons. But still, that this Plurality of Persons does not infer a Plurality of Beings, is manifest from hence, that the Name of each Person hath a necessary Respect to the other Two Is I mention the Father, I include the Son; If the Son, I include the Father; If the Spirit, I must unavoidably be understood to refer to some, whose Spirit this is: and so imply Father and Son both. This is the true Faith, this the Result of sound Doctrine, such as Almighty God hath taught in his Church, and by her Ministry educated me in the Belief and full Persuasion of.

CHAP. XXX.

A Prayer to the Ever-Bleffed Trinity.

I N this Faith, which I do not only profess with all possible Sincerity, but thankfully acknowledge to be thy gracious Gift, for the Benefit and Salvation of my Soul, I call upon my God. And reason good I have to be thankful for this Gift; since the believing Soul lives by Faith, and by Hope embraces that at present, which it shall one day see in Thee. To Thee, therefore I come, with a Mind thus enlightened, full of chaste and holy Desires, happily brought out of thedark Night of Ignorance, to the knowledge of thy Truth; and delivered from the seducing Charms of a treacherous and calamitous World, to tast the sweets

fweets of that Love, which places all its Hopes and Joys in thee. Even Thee, O Blessed and Glorious Trinity in Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my God. my Lord, my Comtorter. Love,

Mercy and Communion of Grace.

O Thou, that begettest, O Thou, that art begotten, O thou that begettest us again to a new Life; Source of Light, Light, of Light, Distributer of Light: The Spring, the Stream, the Watering, the One of whom, the One by whom, the One in whom, are all things; Thou Life in thyself, Life in thy self derived from Life in him self, the Lord and Giver of Life. One Original, One of One, One from the other Two; Truth the Father, Truth the Son, and Truth the Holy Ghost. For in all Three is but One Essence, One Power, One Goodness, One Blessedness, from, and by, and in whom, whatsoever else is blessed, receives its Blessedness.

CHAP, XXXI.

God the True Life.

God, the true Life, of, and by, and in whom all Things live; the common Source of all Good, our Faith in thee excites, our Hope exalts, our Love unites us, Matth 7. 7. Thou commandest us to seek Thee, and art ready to be found; thou bidest us knock, and openest when we do so. To turn from Thee is to fall into Ruin.

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and Death. To turn to Thee, is to rise to Life and Glory; To abide in Thee, is to stand fast and fecure from Danger. No Man lofes Thee, who does not suffer himself to be deceived; No Man feeks Thee, who does not submit to Instruction and Reproof; No Man finds Thee, who does not feek after thee with a clean Heart, and purified Affections. To know thee is Life, to ferve thee is Freedom, to enjoy thee is a Kingdom, to praise thee is the Joy and Happiness of the Soul. Ipraise and bless, and adore thee, with Heart, and Voice. and every Faculty ; I worship thee, I glorify thee, I give thanks to thee for thy great glory, for thy great Goodness, for thy innumerable and inestimable Mercies. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.

I humbly befeech thee, O Bleffed Trinity, to come to me, to abide with me, to reign in me, to make this Heart of mine a holy Temple, a fit Habitation for thy Majesty. I intreat the Father by the Son, the Son by the Father, the Holy Ghost by the Father, and the Son, that all those vicious Dispositions may be removed far from me, which might give offence to those Eyes that cannot behold Iniquity; and that all those Virtues may abound in me, in which the God of Unity delights ! Othou Maker and preserver of all things visible and invisible, keep, Ibeseech thee, the Work of thy own Hands, who trusts in thy Mercy alone for Safety and Protection. Guard me with the Power of thy Grace, here and in all Places, now and at all Times, within and without, before and behind, above and below; Let thy holy Angels pitch their Tents round about me, and so possess themselves of all the Passes to my Heart, that the trecherous Enemy of Souls may have no Place left open, whereby to make his approach.

Thou art the Guardian and Defender of all that depend upon Thee; without whose watchful Care none can be fafe; without whose mighty Power none is a Match for the Dangers and Temptations which every moment beset him. Ifa 45. 5. Thou art God, and there is none beside thee, in Heaven above, or in Earth beneath: Pial 56. 10. Thou art great and dost wonderous things; Who can recount, who can conceive them ! Honour and Praise are thine; Angels and Spirits, and all the Creation join in fetting forth thy Glory, and paying the constant humble Homage due from Creatures to their Creator, from Servants to their Lord, from Subjects and Soldiers to their Victorious Leader and Universal King.

CHAP. XXXII-

The Praises of Angels and Men.

To Thee the pure and lowly in Heart, To Thee the Soul of the Righteons, to Thee the Citizens of the heavenly ferulalem, to Thee the numerous Orders of Intellectual Spirits, fing Hymns

Hymns of Joy perpetually; fall down before thy Throne, and cast their Crowns at thy Feet, and with profoundest Reverence adore the Brightness af thy Majesty. Not only these, but Man, a valuable Part of the Creation, fince formed in thy Refemblance, and plac'd chief in Honour of all things here below: He Joins in Praises too, though not able to discharge the Duty, with the same noble and exalted Zeal, as the Bright Hofts of Heaven. Nay, even I the last and least of Men, laden with Sin and Frailty, do yet defire to magnify thee worthily, to love thee perfectly, Help me, my God, my Life, my Strength, affift the Desires thou canst not but approve, and make me capable of glorifying thee, Shed abroad thy Light in my heart, put thy Word in my Mouth; that my Pfal. 71. 8, beart may be filled with thy praife, and my tongue may fing of thy glory and bonour all the day long.

But in regard Praise is not comely in the mouth of a Sinner, and I, alas ! am a man of unclean lips, purge me, I beseech thee, from all manner of Impurity; Isa 6. 5. Touch my Heart and Tongue with a coal from thine altar; wash away my Filth and purify my Drose, so shall I be fit to offer thee the Sacrifice of Praise. And when I do so, be thou gracionsly pleased to accept the little I can give, according to the Inclinations and Sincerity of my Heart; Hos 14. 2. Heb 13. 15, Psal 141. 2. accept the calves of my Lips. Let my prayer be set forth in thy presence, and let the lifting up of my bands

be an evening facrifice. Let the continual, and the most delightful Remembrance of Thee dissuss a constant Joy through my whole Soul, and transport it with a most ardent Love of invisible Blessings: That my Affections may rise from Earth to Heaven, from temporal Objects to Eternal, and from the dark confused View of the Creature, to the astonishing and beatifick Vision of the Creator.

Pial 42. 1, 2.

O Eternal Truth, and true Love, and beloved Eternity; my Soul panteth after thee Day and Night; on Thee all my hopes and Thoughts are fixed, and in the Enjoyment of thee are all determined. I John 3. 2. He that knows thee. knows Truth and Eternity: For thou art feated on high above all; whom, when this Life of Dimness is dispersed, and the Veil of mortal Flesh drawn aside, we see as thou art. At prefent the language wherewith others accost me, is, Where is thy God? and the Question I often put to thee, is, Where art thou now my God? I now and then take breath, and feem to live, Pial 42. when I pour out my Heart before thee in the voice of joy and thanksgiving; But even in the midst of Mirth, a Damp comes over my Spirits, because my Soul falls back again from these pleasing Exercifes; and, even when most desires to mount up above the highest Heahens, feels itself dragg'd down into a dark and great Deep; or rather finds itself to be no better than a dark and great Deep.

In this Abis indeed sometimes I perceive some Glimmerings

Glimmerings of Light, from the Faith which thou haft kindled to shine in the Darkness. Thus fornetimes rowles me in David's strain: Pfal 43. 5, 6. 129. 105. Why art thou fo beavy Omy Soul and why art thou disquieted within me! Still put thy trust in God. His Word is a lantborn to my paths. Still truft in God till the Night wear off, Ephel 2. 3. And the Wrath of God of which we were sometimes Children, be over-past, and the overflowings of Ungodliness be carried clean away. The remains of these Miseries we must be content to carry about us, while burdened with aBody, dead in regard of Sin, till fuch times as the shades and thick Clouds be dispelled by the dawn of the Day of Life. Put thy truft in God and tarry bis pleasure; for in the Morning I shall stand before him and behold his Glory, and be filled with his Praise. Even his, who thall Rom 8. 11. quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us. 1 Thef 5. 5. His. who fall make us Light, that we may be Children of the Day, and not any longer of the Night, nor of Darkness. Eph 5, 8. For we were sometimes Darkness but now are we Light in the Lord, but such we are as yet by Faith only, and not by Sight and Fruition. Rom 8, 24. For we are faved through Hope, but Hope that is feen is not Hope.

The numerous Progeny of Angels and Celeftial Spirits do indeed glorify thy Name; after a Manner very different from ours. They have no Need to study the Holy Scriptures, and learn from thence

thence the Glories of thy Essence. They see the Bleffed Trinity Face to Face, and read in Thee the Counsels of thy Eternal Will and Wisdom: They read, and chuse, and love all thy good Pleasure; and what they read they never lose the Remembrance of, Nor shall this Book ever be shut to-them; because thou art ever present with them, the same to all Eternity, hibiting thyself continually to their Understandings. O Blessed Spirits, who are thus enabled to offer thee the tribute of their Praise without any Mixture of Infirmity, without any Interruption, without the allay of anxious care and forrow, who drink of thy pleasures as out of the river, and exult with the sweet transports of Joy unspeakable. For their Praise and their Joy flow both from the same Source; and they always rejoice in thee.

But we poor feeble Mortals, weighed down with a body of Corruption, placed at a vast distance from the bright Beams of thy Countenance, and distracted with variety of worldly cares and Events, are not in a Condition of glorifying thee worthily, Our prospect is but dark and very remote, and the little we are able to do is by the Help of Faith, and not by Sight. But those celestial Spirits wait about thy Throne, and Act by Sight, and not by Faith. This gives them a Capacity of knowing, and loving, and praising, above what the present State of Flesh and Blood will admit even the most exalted Devotion upon Earth

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to attain to. But notwithstanding the different Manner and Value of their more perfect and our feebler Praises, still thou art the same God, the common Creator of Angels and Men. The Sacrifice is the same offered in Heaven and in Earth, and Centers all in Thee at last, from whatsoever Quarter it come. Nor do our weakest Essays, when compared with Their noblest Performances, discourage us from hopeing, that We shall one Day by thy bounteous Mercy be received up to the same blissful Mansions, made Members of the Heavenly Choir, and in their Company see and adore, and Praise thy glorious Name for ever. In the mean while, Lord, grant me thy Assistance, that while I sojourn in this mortal Body, I may do all for which my present Circumstances are qualified : that my Heart may sensibly affected with thy Goodness, my Tongue continually spake of thy Honour, and Pial. 35. 10. all my Bones fay, Lord who is like unto Thee ?

Thou art that God Almighty, Three in Person but One in Substance: The Father begotten of none, The Son only begotten of the Father, The Holy Ghost proceeding from, yet ever remaining in, the Father and Son both; whom we admire and adore, as Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity: When we were nothing, thy Power gave us being; when we were lost by Sin, and worse than nothing, thy inestimable Mercy contrived a wonderful Method of restoring us to a new

not to be insensible and unthankful under so gracious a Dispensation; help us to walk worthy of thy Manifold, thy unspeakable Mercies; and increase in us daily thy Graces, strengthen our Faith, exalt our Hope, and enslame and enlarge

our Charity.

Enable us by the powerful Influence of thy bleffed Spirit, to continue stedfast in the Belief of thy Truth, and plentifully to bring forth the Fruits agreeable to that Belief; that so, by a true Faith, and a suitable Practice thy Mercy may at last bring us to the Attainment of everlasting Salvation; That we may be with Thee where Thou art, and see Thee as Thou art, and adore the brightness of thy Majesty, and join our hearts and Voices with those, whom thou hast already admitted to that glorious Sight, in Hymns of Joy and Praise. Saying with all the Company of Heaven, Glory to the Father whose Wisdom created us, Glory to the Son whoseLove redeemed us, Glory to the Holy Spirit whose Graces fanctified us; Glory to the Almighty and undivided Trinity, whose Works are inteparable, and Dominion without end. To Thee belongs Praise and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power and Thanks and Praise be unto Thee, our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A Prayer for Zeal, in the Service and Praise of God.

Ardon, O gracious Lord, Pardon and Pity, most tender Father, my wretched Ignorance, and manifold Imperfections. Do not reject my forwardness as rash and over-bold, becaule I, who am but a Servant Luke 17. 10. (O that I were but a good, and not a careless and unprofitable, and therefore a wicked and most unworthy Servant) Presume to Praise and Adore, the great and terrible God. And when I do fo, feel my Heart touched with that deepContrition, nor my Eyes overflowing with Tears, nor my Soul humbled with that awful Reverence and Godly Fear, which best become my Vileness and thy Majesty, For sure if Angels themselves fall down, and tremble before thee, it is but fit that fo finful a Creature as I, should approach thee with Dread and Sorrow; with fad Apprehenfions of the Justice I have provoked to Anger, and constant Lamentations of my own Guilt and unworthiness: That I should exceedingly Fear and Quake, and never come into thy Presence, but with a pale dejected Countenance, with weeping Eyes, and shivering Limbs. This I am fensible I ought, and this I wish to do; but yet I do it not, because I cannot do what I fincerely wish Icould, and wonder greatly that I cannot bring myfelf to do. But who is able to do this, without the affistance of thy Grace? For, as our Salvation itself is entirely thy Gift, so every pious Disposition, which tends, to qualify us for it, is of thy great

and free Mercy.

O wretched Man, whose Heart is so hard, so stupid, as not to be broken with the Terrors of the Great God, when he appears before thee, and takes upon him to publish thy Praise! O flinty Creature, more impenetrable than the nether Millstone, whose Eyes do not melt even into floods of Tears, when the least of all thy Servants, expostulates with his Master, Man with God, the Creature with his Creator. Dust and Ashes with him who made me out of nothing! Behold, OLord, I lay myself open before Thee, and do not spare to tell all the World, the mean and guilty Reflections, with which my Thoughts upbraid me when alone. I only beg, that Thou, who art rich in Mercy, wilt impart to me out of thy abundance, and from the Treasures of thy Goodness, let me receive fomething, which may be graciously accepted by Thee. For we can only ferve thee of thy own; and at any time thou art pleased with our Endeavours, those very Endeavours are of the Ability, which thyfelf didft first vouchfase to give us.

Do thou therefore, from whom every good Gift cometh, strike this Rock, that the Waters of Holy Sorrow may flow out abundantly: And when this sinful Soul attempts to pay its Tribute of Preises and Thanksgiving, let it be done with that becoming Mixture of Humility and Remorse, of profound Reverence and inward Purity, and holy

Joy, which They, who love thee perfectly, and praise thee worthily, seel their Hearts affected with such as may entitle me to all those spiritual Comforts described in Scripture: When it is said, Psal 34. 8. 79. 86. 85. 5, 6, 7. O tast and see how gracious the Lord is, Blessed is the Man that trusteth in him, Blessed is the people that can rejoice in Thee. Blessed is the Man whose strength is in Thee in whose Heart are thy ways, who passing through the Vally of weeping make it a Well. and go from strength to strength till they appear in Sion. Matt. 5. 8. And, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And again, Psal 85. 4. Blessed, Lord, are they that dwell in thy house, they will be always praising thee

CHAP. XXXIV.

An AEt of Devotion and Love of God.

Bleffed Jesus, my Sacrifice and Ransom, the Delight and desire of my Soul, God of God, mercifully affift the Prayers of thy humble Servant. On Thee I call, to Thee I cry with a loud Voice, and from the bottom of my Heart. Thy presence I invite into my Soul, O enter there and fit it up for thyself, Ephes 5. 27. that it may not offend thee by spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but be holy and without blemish. For such a clean dwelling only can be acceptable to the purity of so divine an Inhabitant. Do thou therefore

therefore Sanctity me. a Vessel made by thy own Hands; and make me fit for thy own use: Purge out all the remains of Wickedness; fill me with thy Grace, and keep me ever in that fulness, that I may be builded up a holy Temple, an Habitation such as my God will not distain here and for ever. O sweetest, kindest, dearest, most powerful, most precious, loveliest, and most beautiful Saviour; more delicious than Honey, whiter than Snow, of more Value than Gold and precious Stones, and more dearer to me than all the Riches and Honours, and Pleasures this World can afford.

But what does all I have faid amount to, my God, my only Hope, my unspeakable Mercy? What have I faid, my sweet Repose, my sure Refuge in all this? Alas! I fay as much as I can. tho' in no Degree as much as I ought, upon fo glorious a Subject. O that I were capable of exprefling thy Excellencies, in as perfect and becoming a Manner, as the melodious Choir of Angels do in their perperual Conforts of Praise? How gladly would I then spend all my Breath, and even warble out my Soul in Songs of Thankfgiving? With what ardent, with what indefatigable Devotion, would I proclaim thy Glories in the midst of thy Congregations? But I cannot do so much as becomes me, is that a Reason why I should do nothing? No, I will exert my utmost Powers, and speak my best, though I can never speak enough: For woe to them that are filent

filent on this Occasion; since them who are willing thou rendrest able, making even the Dumb to speak; Psal 8. 2. And out of the Mouths of very Babes and sucklings perfecting praise. Woe then to them, who do not employ their Tongues to thy Honour, since even the greatest Masters of Eloquence, who use them most and best, yet in Essect are dumb, and say nothing to Purpose, when they do not employ their Tongues to thy Honour.

Who can fetforth thy Greatness as it deserves, O inexpressible Power and Wisdom of the Father ! But in regard no Words are to be found, fufficient to declare the Omnipotent and Omnipresent Word, I will at least contrive the best I can, and go the greatest Length Mortality is qualified for, till thou shalt receive me to thy ownself and enable me to express my Praises, in terms fuitable to thy Dignity and my Duty. In the mean while it is my earnest Request, that thou wouldst measure my present feeble Essays, not by what I fay, but what I defire to fay. For it is the most Vehement wish and longing of my Soul, to give fuch Praises, as I know are becoming so great a Majesty to receive, and a due Homage for a Creature to give. And, thou, my God, who knowest the Secrets of all Hearts, and art conscious to every Motion of my Soul, canst bear me witness, that Heaven and Earth, and all that therein is, are of small Consideration with me in Comparison with thee. What ever else may challenge

lenge a Place in my Affections, ceases to be of any Regard at all, and ought indeed to be hated, when put in the Balance with my God. This is the real Sense of my Soul, with such unrivall'd, such a fervent Passion I love my God; and yet am sensible withal, that this is less than thy due, and therefore desire above all things, to love thee still more and more.

O grant, that I may daily grow, and continue for ever stedfast in thy Love; that I may pay thee all the Affection I wish I could, all I owe and should pay; that thou mayst be my only Aim and End, the only Object of my Thoughts. Píal 63. 6. Let my Days be spent in meditating upon thee incessantly; and my Dreams present no other Idea to my Imagination; let mp Spirit confer with thee upon my Bed, and remember thee alone, when waking in the Night Seafon. Let the Light of thy Countenance shine through every Corner of my Heart, that under thy Government and Conduct I may proceed Psal 85.6. from frength to strength, till at length I see the God of Gods in Sion: and whom I now can only take an imperfect Glimpse of, through a dark and broken Glass, 1 Cor 13. 12. Matt 5. 8. may then behold face to face, and know even as I am known. And fince this is a Bleffing, in a peculiar Manner to the pure in heart, I entreat thee, by all that Goodness and Compassion, which hath deliver'd us from Death eternal, let thy most powerful holy Union foften this hard rocky Heart of mine, and render

render it susceptible of tender and good Impressions, that the Fire of Compunction and holy Zeal may be cherished there continually, and render it

a daily living Sacrifice unto thee.

Grant me the Grace of an humble and contrite Spirit, that I may come into thy Presence washed clean with Tears of godly Sorrow. And let my Affections be so inseparably united to thee, that I may have no carnal Defire left, but be utterly cold and dead to this World. Let me not to much as remember transitory Things for the Venemence of the Fear and Love I bear to God; that these momentary Trifles may no longer be Matter of Grief, or Joy, or Concern to me; nor any flattering Prosperity have Power to biass or corrupt my Heart, nor any Terror of Adverfity to shake my Constancy. And because the Love of thee is strong as Death itself, let this, I beseech thee, entirely posfefs and swallow up my Soul, let the sweet and holy Fire confume all the Cross of worldly Affections, that I may cleave to thee alone, John 4. and make it my constant Meat and Drink to do thy Will, and know no refreshments, but such as flow from the delightful Remembrance of thee.

Send down, OLord, send down into my Heart thy precious Odours, that I may be ravish'd with the Fragrance of my heavenly Spouse, Let the delightful Relish of thy Sweetness excite in me holy and eager Desires, John 4. 14. and be in mea well of living Water springing up to everlast-

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ing life. Thy Greatness O my God, is unmeasurable, and therefore the Love of thee ought to be fo too; for fure no Bounds ought to determine the Gratitude and Praise of those whom thou hast vouchsafed to redeem with thy own most precious Blood. O tender Lover of Souls, O merciful Lord O righteous Judge, to whom thy Father bath committed all Judgment, thou feest and declarest how fit it is, Luke 16. 8. that the children of this world should in their generation be wifer than the children of light; that the Sons of Night and Darkness should be our Pattern, and that it is just Matter of Reproach to us, if they shall love and pursue the perishing Riches, and sleeting Pleasures and Advantages with a more intent defire and more unwearied Endeavours, than thy own Servants feek and love the Source and Sum of their true Happiness; even thee their God, who made them, when they were not; and redeemed them, when otherwise it were better for them not to have been at all,

And, if one Man love another Man so fervently if a Spouse be so fond of her Beloved, as not, with out the utmost Impatience, and even inconsolable Grief, to bear the Absence of a Friend so dear; what Affection, what Zeal, what ardent Desire of constant Union, ought that Soul to express; whom thou hast betroth'd and marry'd to himself, by Faithfulness and Mercies manifold? How fond ought we to be of conversing with and enjoying the great God, the most amiable Husband,

Husband, who bath loved us, and faved us after fo aftonishing a Manner, and for our Sakes done fo many, fo great, fo kind, fo wonderful Things? For, though the Objects here below have indeed fome Delights peculiar to themselves, which attract our Hearts, and kindle Affections and Defires proportioned to them; yet do they not affect us after the same manner, as thou our God. and the bleffed Objects above do. The righteous Man rejoices in thee, because the Love of thee is a calm and sweet Resentment. For every Breast thus disposed is filled with an equal, secure, and serene Pleasure, But the Love of the World and the Flesh is ruffled with anxious Fears, and violent Emotions: it utterly destroys the Peace of the Soul where it takes Possession, and distracts them with cares and Suspitions, with Tealousies and Passions, and a thousand uneasy Apprehentions.

Most justly therefore art thou the Joy and Delight of good Men, because thou art the only Haven where thoy be at Rest; and with thee alone is that Life, which brings Quietness, and Affurance, settled and fincere Pleasure. that enters into thee enters into the Joy of his Lord, where Fears of future Evils have no Place. Fixed in this most happy Station, and secure of Change and Danger, he can speak Comfort to his Soul in these Words of the Psalmist, Psal 132 14. 123. 12. This shall be my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein And'

And again, The Lord is my shepherd, therefore ean I lack nothing: He shall make me to lie down in green pastures, and send me forth beside the still waters.

O that it might pleas my sweetest dearest Jefus to fill my Heart with such a Love of him, as never can be quenched; to be ever present in my Mind, that I may be all over Love, and burn with perpetual Defires of his Company and Enjoyment. Let this Defire exalt my Heart, and enable it to throw of that Load of sensual Affections, which now obstruct and pull me down, and do but add to my Miseries, instead of gratifying my Inclinations. And, having laid afide this Weight, help me to run chearfully and apace after the Odour of thy Ointment, still keeping on my Course without Incumbrance or Diversion, till by thy gracious Guidance I at last shall be received to thy ownself, there to be feasted for ever with the Pleasures of thy beautious Presence.

For two so different Passions, a good and Evil, a Sweet and a Bitter, cannot dwell together in the same Breast. I John 2.15. And therefore, If any Man Love any thing besides thee. the Love of God is not in him. O Love of exquisite Pleasure, and exquisite Pleasure of Love! Love, all Delight without Allay of Torment; Love chaste and perfect, whose bright Flame never can be extinct, but burns pure and chearful to all Eternity; myGod, my Jesus, who art Love and

Part with this holy Fire, pour thy transporting Joys, thy inexpressible Comforts and sweet Raptures abundantly into my Soul; kindle there Desires chaste andholy, peaceful and calm, pleasant and secure, that thus overflowing with Delight, and inflamed with Desire, I may love thee Mark. 12. 30. my God. with all my heart, and soul and strength; that thou mayst be always in my Mind, and Mouth, and Sight; at all Times and in all Places, and so refresh me, that no Room may be left for any other, which are indeed no better than unfaithful and adulterous Passions.

Hear me, my God, hear thou Light of my Eyes, hear what I ask, and grant my Petition; and, that thou may'ft heare me effectually, do thou inspire and direct my Petitions. O merciful and gracious Lord, let not my manifold Offences stop thy Ears against my Prayers, nor shut out thy Mercy from me; but, according to the Multitude of thy ownGoodness, let thy Servant obtain his Requests, though not for any Merit of his own, yet for the Sake of his Merits and Interceffion, in whom alone he trusts and by him only presumes to ask any thing; Even the bleffed Jesus, the Son of thy Love, I Tim. 2. 5, the one, the powerful mediator between God and Man; who with thee and thy bleffed Spirit liveth and reigneth for ever, Amen.

A Devont Prayer to Christ.

Lord Jesus, the anointed of God, the Word of the Father, who camest into the World on purpose to save Sinners, I intreat thee by the most enlarged Bowels of thy indulgent Mercy, let me ceas to do evil, learn to do well. and reduce my actions to Rule and due Order : Take away from me what soever is offensive to thee, and hurtful to my felf; and implant in me all those Virtues and Graces, which may conduce to my Soul's Advantage, and thy goodLikeing and Acceptance of me. Job 14. 4 Rom 4. 5. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, but thou alone? Thou art God infinite in Goodness and Power. Ephel 2. I justifying the ungodly, quickening them that lay dead in trespasses and Sins, changing the Hearts of Men, and forming them into new and different Creatures. Thy Eyes behold my many and great Imperfections: Look down upon them with an Eye of Pity, fend down thy Hand of Compassion from above, and remove far from me wharever is Displeasing in thy Sght. My spiritual Health and Diseases are both in thy Sight, O strengthen I beseech thee, and Preserve the former, and in much Mercy Heal the latter.

Heal thou me, Blessed Physician of Souls, and so shall I be Healed; hold thou me up, Thou Almighty Preserver of Men, and so shall I be safe, Psal 147. 3. Thou who givest Medicines for the cure of our sickness, and sustainest that Health

which

which is thy own; Thou who repairest our brea. ches, and buildest up our decayed Ruins with a Word of thy Mouth. Luke 8. 14. If Thou think fit (as I hope thou wilt) to fow the good Seed in thy Field, my Heart, the first part of that bleffed Work must be to Prepare and Correct the Soil, by rooting out the Weeds and Thorns of vicious Habits and Dispositions, which else will choak the Work, and make it Unfruitful. sweetest, kindest, dearest Jesus, pour into me, I beg thee, the abundance of thy Love, that there may be no remains of earthly or fenfual Defires or Thoughts in my Breast, but Thou and thy Love may remain unrivall'd there, and possess my Heart entirely. Write thy Law in my Mind, that Thou and thy Commands may be ever before mine Eyes. Kindle in my Soul that holy Fire, which thou hast sent into the World, that it may melt away my Drofs, and qualify me for offering to thee the daily Sacrifice of a broken and contrite Spirit.

Sweetest Redeemer, as thou hast given me the sincere Desire, so give me the Attainment of thy chaste and holy Love, servent as my Desires, and entire as the Sincerity with which I ask it. Jer. 9. 1. Let my head be waters, and my Eyes a fountain of tears, that these may speak for me, and testify the Greatness of my Love, and the inward Delights I feel, too big to be contained within my Heart, and perpetually running over in Tears

of Joy.

I Sam I, I frequently call to Mind the devout Addresses of thy servant Hanna, who came to thy Tabernacle to beg a Son from thee · And, upon each remembrance of her remarkable Piety and Perseverance in Prayers, I find myself tormented with Grief, and confounded with Shame, for my own coldness and deadness in Devotion. For if She did not only Weep, but continue Weeping, in hopes of obtaining a Son; What affectionate Complaints, What measure of Tears become my Soul, which comes to thee in Prayer, which feeks and loves my God and Saviour, defiring to receive him, and be received to him. What Sighs and Groanings, what earnest Gaspings, what impatient Thirstings ought I to bring, who am in pursuit of my God Day and Night, and defire to love and enjoy nothing but Him only? O look then upon me, extend thy Mercy to me, Pfal 25. 17. the forrows of my beart are enlarged : Permit me to tast of thy heavenly Comforts, and do not disdain that finful Soul, for which thou didst not Grudge to die : Give me Plenteousness of Tears, flowing from an affectionate Heart, fuch as, by lamenting, may prevail for Forgiveness of my Sins, a Releas from those Bonds with which I have so long been tied, and a Godly Sorrow, which may produce spiritual and heavenly Joy. That, if I cannot rise to that exalted Pitch of Zeal with some illustriouse Martyrs and Confessors and eminently devout Men, whose bright Examples I despair of coming up with; I may however not fuffer

fuffer myself to be out-done by the weaker Sex, but be admitted to a Share in thy Kingdom with devout Women.

Another Instance of female Devotion comes also often into my Remembrance : Her I mean, whose vehement Affections for thee put her upon waiting at thy Sepulchre; who though the Dif ciples went away, would not depart with them, John 20. but fat there weeping and deploring the supposed Loss of her dear Lord; and rising frequently, to search the empty Cave with anxi-ous Eyes, not trusting her own Senses, but hopeing and seeking still, in despite of their former Reports, to feek him whom her Soul loved, She had, no doubt, examined the Grave with a most nice Diligence before; but still her passionateDefires could not be Satisfied, that the had fought thee with sufficient Care. For that which crowns and recommends every good Work, is the Virtue of perseverance. This Person then, because she loved more than the rest, and expressed that love by her weeping, and fought thee carefully with Tears, and still continued feeking, notwithstanding so many former Disappointments, obtained Preference above the rest, and had the honour to find, and see, and converse with thee, before any other Person whatsoever.

Not only so, but She was made choice of to be the first Peeacher of his Resurrection. By Her thou didst impart the Joyful tidings to the disconsolate Disciples, and refresh their Memories,

with

with thy promise of visiting them again, Matth 28. 10. saying Go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, there shall they see me. If then this Woman wept so tenderly, who sought the living among the dead, and touched thee with the hand of Faith; How should that Soul be affected, and how lasting ought that affection to be, which believes in the Heart, and confesses with the Mouth, a gloristed Redeemer enthroned in Heaven, and reigning over the whole World? What Sighs and Tears should breath out from that Heart, which loves nothing but Thee, and above all things longs to gain a Sight of Thee: Of Thee, the only Refuge and Hope of the miserable, who art never addressed to without a comfortable expectation of Mercy.

In this confidence I intreat thee for thy own sake, and for the Glory of thy holy Name, to grant me such a tender and affectionate Sense of Thy Goodness, and my own Unworthiness that every time I think, or speak, or read or write of, upon every Remembrance of, and every Approach to my God and Saviour, in the Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise, my Eyes may overflow with Tears of Remorse and Love. Thou the King of Glory, the Teacher and Pattern of all Virtues, hast instructed us to weep both by thy Word and by thy own Example. Thou hast said. Matth 5. 4. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. John 11.35. and didst thyself shed Tears of Compassion for thy deceased

Friend,

Friend, and yet more abundantly for the ungracious City of thy People, and its approaching Destruction.

Luke 19. 41.

By thy most precious Tears, and by all the wonderful Instances of thy Mercy for the Relief of loft Mankind, I beg the Grace of Tears and godly Sorrow, which my Soul vehemently thirsts after. I cannot attain to this except thou vouchfate to give it me; for it is thy Spirit alone that can bring Water out of this Rock, and foften the Hearts of hardened Sinners. This thou hast been pleased to communicate freely to many primitive and eminent Saints, whose pious Footsteps I defire to tread in. Send down thy former and thy latter Rain, and water this dry Soil with the Dew of Heaven, that I may with true Compunction bewail my Sin and Mifery. And kindle in my Heart a firvent Zeal, that I may be a Burnt Offering to thee, a Sacrifice of sweet Savour in thy Presence. And let my Tears wash that polluted Offering, that it may be presented clean and pure. For of these I shall still have daily need; because, though by the affistance of thy Grace, I consecrate my self never so devoutly and entirely to thy Service, yet fuch is my Frailty, Jam: 3. 2. that still in many things I shall offend. Grant me therefore this necessary Grace, that I may tast of the Cup, and quench my Thirst, that my Soul may ever pant after thee, and burn with the Love of Thee alone, regardless of any other Odjects

Object, and getting above the Vanities of Sense,

and Miferies of the World.

Hear me my God, hearken, thou Light of my Eyes, grant me my Request, and grant me to ask such things as thou delightest to give. Let not my manifold Offences stop the current of thy Grace, Psal 65. 2. 51. 1. 25. 7. whose Property is to be a God bearing prayer, and always to have Mercy. But according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences, and think upon me, O Lord for thy goodness sake.

CHAP. XXXVI.

A Prayer in time of Affliction.

passion upon a most miserable Sinner doing the Things he ought not, and enduring the things which he hath most justly deserved, and every Day multiplying his Ossences, and smarting daily under thy correcting Rod for them. When I reselect upon my many and great Provocations, I cannot but confess my Sufferings light and gentle in comparison; and own they do by no means bear Proportion to what I have incurred and might expect. Psal 119. 137. 92. 15. Righteous art Ibou, O Lord, and just are thy Judgments. Yea just and faithful is my God, and there is no iniquity in Him. Thou sendest Affliction, but thou sendest it upon Creatures and upon Sinners

and

and canst not therefore be charged with Injustice or Cruelty. For what is the utmost we groan under? How does this declare thy Power, in Comparison of that Almsghty Instance of it, which commanded us into Being, when we were not? How does this deserve the Imputation of Rigor, when set against that infinite Mercy, which in wonderful Pity redeemed and restored us to Happiness and Life, when Sin had reduced us to a Condition so lost and desparate, that even our

Being was become a Curse to us? ..

I am abundantly convinced, that the Events of this Life are not left to the rash uncertain hirs of blind Chance, but under the steady Governance and wife Difpotal of thy Providence. I know Wisd 11. 24. Matth 6. 30. thou lovest and takest Care of all thy Creatures, but more especially thy faithful Servants, who repose all their Hope and Confidence in thy Mercy, and in this Confidence do chearfully commit themselves, and all their Affairs to thee. In this Persuasion I most humbly pray thee, that thou wouldst deal with me, not according to my Sins, which have made me obnoxious to thy angry Justice; but after thy own great Mercy, which far exceeds not only mine, but the whole World's Offences. And may it please thee, when thon thinkest fit to scourge my outward Man, to strengthen my inward with the Grace of Constancy and unwearied Patience: That, even in the bitterest Anguish of my Soul, thy Goodness may still be acknowledged most chankfully,

thankfully, and thy Praise at no time depart out of my Mouth. Pity me O Lord and help me, according to what thou seest necessary for me both in Body and Soul. Thou knowest all things and canst do all things, and livest for ever. and therefore wilt, I hope, consider my Needs and Infirmities, and extend Mercy and Relief in thy own Time, and in thy own Way, which is always sure to be best and most expedient for us.

CHAP. XXXVII.

A Usefull Prayer.

Lord God Almighty, Three Persons, and One Substence, Eternal and Omnipresent, before All, and in All, God bleffed for ever; I consecrate to thy Use, and commit into thy Custody, this Day and for my whole Life, my Body and my Soul, my Sight and Hearing, my Tast, Touch, and Smelling; all my Thoughts and Affections, my Words and Actions; all without and all within me; my fensitive and intellectual Faculties, my Imagination and Memory. my Faith and my Perseverance; beseeching Thee in Mercy to take Charge of them Day and Night, and guard them fafe from all the Dangers and Temptations, which befet me and attempt to enter at these Avenues every Hour and Moment, Hear me, O Blessed Holy Trinity, and preserve me from all Evil, and all Scandal, and especially from

from all deadly Sin. Protect me from the subtle Treachery, and Violent Assaults, and perpetual Hostilities of evil Spirits, and shield me from the Malice of all my Enemies Visible and Invisible; and under thy mighty Protection, conduct me safe at last tothose blissful Mansions, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, inhabited by Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins, and all the Holy Men and Women, who have walked in thy Fear and done the Will of their heavenly Father faithfully from the beginning of the World.

Root out from me, I pray thee, all confident Boafting, spiritual Pride, and Arrogance, and beat down my Soul with true Compunction for my Sins and a profound unaffected Humility. Open a Vent for the Tears of Repentance; and, when thou hast softned this Rock within my Breast, let those Streams gush out abundantly. Psal 9. 13. Deliver me, O Lord, from the snare of the bunter, and give not my Soul up a Prey to them that feek its ruin, but keep me ever fafe and stedfast in the Performance of thy Will. Pfal 143. 10. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God. Give me a right Judgment, and perfect Understanding in Divine Truths, that I may have worthy Apprehensions of thy unmeasurable Goodness. Direct my Prayers to thee upon all Occasions, and let me ask such Things as thou delightest to give, and are best for me to receive. Kindle in my Heart a holy Zeal, fuch as may incline

incline thy Mercy effectually to blot out the Remembrance of all my past Offences committed against thy divine Majesty. Dan 9. 19. O Lord, bear; O Lord, bearken and do; Defer not for thy own take O my God. If thou rejectest my Petitions, and turnest away thy face. I die; if thou shewest the Light of thy Countenance, I am re-newed-to life. Psal 104. 29, 30. If thou regardest my Righteousness only, This alas! Is no better than Filth and Pollution, and I shall be in thy account no better than a loathfome Carcafe. But if thou look upon me in Thy Mercy, this raises my dead putrifyed Body from the Grave of Sin, and breaths into me again a Life of righteousness and hope. Remove far from me whatever is odious and offensive to thy pure Eyes, and plant in me a Spirit of Charity and Cleanness I Tim 2. 8. that I may lift up boly bands in Prayer. and not bring such a Sacrifice as is an Abomination to my God. Put away from me all hurtful Things, and give me such Things as be profitable for me. O thou bleffed Physician of Souls, grant me Balm for my Wounds, and prope Medicines to heal my spiritual Diseases . Posses my Heart with thy Fear, with Meekness and Reverence, grant me unfeigned Faith, a clean Conscience, and a true Charity, a tender Regard to the Good of my Brethren; let me never favour or forget my own Miscarriages, nor ever be inquifitive after, or severe upon, the Faults or Failings of other People.

O be gracious and compassionate to my poor Soul, to my Frailties and Transgressions. Visit me in my Weakness, heal my Sickness, refresh my Languishings, and revive me from spiritual Death. O! that there were in me a Heart that may always fear thee, a Soul that might always love thee, an Understanding that may rightly apprehend and conceive worthily of thee; Ears ever open to hear thee; Eyes ever fixed and intent to see thee. Have Pity upon me, O my God have pity upon me, and from the Throne of thy Majesty on high cast down a compassionate Look Scatter the thick Night of Ignorance and Error, and enlighten my dark Soul with the bright Beams of thy holy Spirit. Give me the Knowledge of discerning between Good and Evil; and help me to keep a constant watchful Guard over myfelf, that I may fee the things which belong to my Peace, and carefully eschew all those Seducements, that would betray me into irrecoverable Ruin. Above all, I beg free and full Remission of my manifold and grievous Sins of Thee, my Lord who diedst to purchase it; and that, by and through Thee I may find an effectual propitiation, and comfort, and mercy, in all times of tribulation, and anguish of Heart, in all my necessities and distresses, but especially in the hour of death, and day of Judgment. Finally, O Lord, vouchsate to bestow upon me everlasting Life, not for any Works which I have done, (let them be pardoned only, and that is sufficient; Reward they

they cannot deserve) but for thy manifold and great Mercy; upon which I throw myself upon entirely, as the only Refuge and Hope of Sinners

and unproffitable Servants

And now, O Lord Jefus Christ, permit, I pray thee, thy unworthy Servant to express his Charity, by enlarging these Petitions; and let them prevail for Bleffings not only for myfelf but others. Grant to all Princes and Governors, that they may rule thy People in Justice and thy Fear, establish the Thrones of them who do so, in Righteousness and Peace. Inspire thy Ministers with truth and Zeal, that they may agree in a right understanding of thy holy Word; and diligently unanimously profecute their great Work, by fetting forth thy Glory, and fetting forward the Salvation of all Men. Let thy Favour be ever present with thy Catholick Church, and every Member of it, Men and Women, Priest and People, all that believe in Thee, all that labour in thy Love; Increase their Graces daily, and enable them faithfully to improve and persevere in every good Word and Work, Affift all thy Servants with such kinds and degrees of thy Grace as are fuited to their respective Conditions. Inspire all Virgins with Chastity and Modesty, all Persons devoted to thy Service, with Heavenlymindedness and Purity; all marryed Pairs, with Fidelity and mutualLove. To all repenting Sinmers grant Pardon and Consolation; To all Widows and Orphans. Sustenance and Relief; To the

the helpless and oppressed Protection and Justice; To all Travellers a safe Returne Home; To all in Sorrow and Trouble, Patience and Comfort; To all who are at Sea, their desired Port; and to every one tost upon the Waves of this troublesome World, the Haven of Salvation, and the Land of everlasting Life. Enable those that are strong to stand, help them that are growing in Goodness to prosper and improve daily more and more, and to all that live in Sin, to wretched me in particular, give the Grace of speedy Recollection, and effectual Amendment.

For, O sweetest and most merciful Jesus, Son of the living God, and Saviour of the World, I acknowledge myfelf a most unworthy, most miferable Sinner; but thou, O Father of Mercies, who hast Compassion upon all, wilt not suffer me to perish, nor cast me utterly out of thy Sight. Had that been thy Intention thou wouldst have cut me off in the midst of my Wickedness, and not have allowed me Space or Disposition to repent. Since therefore thou art pleased still to forbear Punishment, and grant me a Truce, give me a Heart, as thou hast given me Opportunities, to make my Peace with thee. Influence my Mind powerfully, that I may feek, and defire, and love thee above all things, and fear above all to offend thee, and be careful constantly to please thee.

Lastly, O God, and Father, blessed for ever, I intreat thee for all them, who make charitable mention of me in their Prayers, and all who have

desired

defired to be recommended to thy Favour, in those of the least and most unworthy of thy Servants: For all who have done me any good Offices, or are in any degree related to me; that thou wouldest hear them for me, and me for them; and, according to thy bounteous Mercy, preferve and govern them, and return all their Kindness and Charity sevenfold into their Bosom. That thou wouldst impart liberally to all who are yet engaged in their Christian Warfare, the Succours of thy Grace; and in thy own good time, to all who have happily finish'd their Course, the Confummation of Reward and Glory. Rev 11. And, O thou, who art Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End, Once more I repeat that most important Request, that, when the time appointed for my great Change shall come, thou wilt in Mercy stand by me at my last Hour, strengthen me in my Conflict, support me in my dying Agonies, pluck me out of the Jaws of the ravening Wolf, who will then stand ready to seize and to devour me; defend me from his Terrors and Accusations, and take me for thy own: So shall I be received into the bleffed Company of Saints and Angel, in thy heavenly Paradife; there to rejoice, and live, and reign with thee for ever; who art over all, God bleffed for ever. Amen. sweet Jesus, Amen,

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Devout

Devout Reflections upon the Sufferings of Christ. L Cord . 30 drivery flow box

Lord Jesus Christ, who art made unto me of God, Redemption, and Mercy, and Salvation; I praise thee, I bless thee, I render thanks to-thee; but Thanks that do by no means bear proportion to the inestimable Benefits for which they are due; Thanks wretchedly defective in their Zeal and Devotion, which ought to warm this frozen Heart of mine, upon every Remembrance of thee: Not fuch as I am fenfible I owe. but yet the best my Soul can with its utmost Efforts reach up to. Thou Hope of my Heart and Strength of my Soul, let thy power supply what my Weakness cannot attain to, thy fervent Love make up for my lukewarm Affections: For though I have not yet been able to love thee fo much as I ought, yet, if Sincerity can be accepted instead of Perfection, my Conscience supports me with this Testimony, that I defire, however, and wish with all my Soul that I were able, to to love thee as much as I ought to do.

O Light shed from above into my Soul, from whom no Secrets are hid; thou feeft my inward Parts, and art conscious to all my Desires. If any good be there, it is of thy inspiring; if this of loving thee be (nay, because I am sure it is) good, and from thee, enable me to perform that which thou hast made me to defire; and grant that Imay love thee to a degree as exalted as thou requireft, I offer to thee Thanks and Praises, let not that

Gift

Gift be barren, and produce no worthy Fruit in me, which thou hast of thy own free Grace com-But Crown and Perfect thy own municated. Work; and, as thy goodness first prevented me with holy Defires, moved by no Deferts of mine, fo, I beseech thee, continue the same Graces in. granting those Desires their just Accomplishment. Awaken myStupidity, quicken my Deadness, and change my cold Indifference into a most sensible and fervent Zeal. For this is the Aim and End of my Prayers, this is the proper Effect of all my Reflections upon thee and all thy Benefits, that the more I converse with thee, and the oftner I remember thee, the more vehemently I may love thee.

It was thy Goodness, O Lord, that created me at first: It was thy Mercy, that when Iwas created, cleanfed me from the Stains of original Sin; it was thy Power, which preferved me after the Sanctification of Baptism; it was thy Clemency, thy Bounty, thy Long-fuffering, which, notwithstanding my numberless actual Provocatione fince, hath forborn, sustained, and waited for my Amendment. Thou, Lord. haft long expected the Return of thy prodigal Child; and I. but not, alas! with equal Carefulnets, wait for the Inspiration of thy Grace, to work in me Repentance and Holine's of Life. My God, my Maker, thou that sparest me, thou that sustainest me, I hunger and thirst after thee, I gasp for. and pant after thee. And as a darling but desolate Child.

Child, debarred of his most indulgent Father's Presence, weeps and laments incessantly, and thinks and longs for nothing but his beloved Company, and wears the Image of his Face perpetually in his Heart: So I am moved by the tender impressions, and with an eager impatience lament my Distance from thee. I often think upon, and am very fenfibly affected tho' not so sensibly as I wish and ought to be, with thy Sorrows and Sufferings: thy Buffettings and Scourgings, thy Reproaches and Revilings, thy Wounds and expiring Agonies; how thou wert kill'd and crucify'd, how thou wert embalm'd and bury'd, and withall how gloriously thou didst rife again, and how triumphantly ascended up into Heaven; and all this for me, finful Man and for my Salvation. These Things I believe, with a most stedfast Faith; and, in vertue of that Persuasion. I bewail the Miseries of my Pilgrimage and Exile from thee; I propose no other Comfort to myself: comparable to that of my Lord's Return to me, and do most ardently defire, as the Sum and Source of all my Happiness, to see thy bounteous Face for ever in thy Glory.

Say, my Soul, if thou canft, how thou shouldst have been affected, hadst thou seen this Lord in Person: Seen the King of Angels emptying himself of Majesty, and condescending to converse with Men, that Men might be exalted to live and converse with Angels; seen thy offended God die.

die, to reconcile vile Offenders to himself, and so prevent their everlasting Death. O what Expresfions, what Conceptions, what Wonder can be great enough, for this unparalell'd, this amazing Love and Goodness! But draw a little nearer yet, my Soul, and take a more distinct View of this tragical, this aftonishing Scene. Could'st thou have feen thy dearest Saviour's Side pierced with a Spear, and would not the same Weapon have pierced through thy own Heart also? Couldst thou have flood by, and beheld the Hands and Feet of him that created thee, torn with Nails, and fastned to the Cross, and the Blood which redeemed thee gushing out in Streams, and not have funk thyfelf, and even expired, with Grief and Horror at the fight?

Say then withal, (but that thou canst not say] why thou dost now read, and meditate upon these things, (which when seen by the Eye of Faith, are as certain, as if present to that of the Body] with so slender impression and Concern: Why dost not thou drink up the bitter Cup of Tears, since thy Jesus did for thee drink that of his Father's Wrath? Why dost thou not feel a Grief too deep to be described, like that of his Virgin Mother, when she saw her innocent and only Son, bound and scourged, tortured and slain before her Face; since the Relation here too is most close and dear, and as thy Lord was hers, so art thou thy Lord's Flesh and Bones; A Member of that Body whereof he is the Head?

R

Had

Had I, with Holy Joseph, taken my Lord down from the Cross, wrapped him in Spices, and laid him in the Sepulchre, how happy should I have esteemed myself, that any officious Respects of mine had contributed to the Honour of his Interment? What glad Aftonishment should I have felt, had I been in Company with those zealous Women, who were affrighted with a Vision of Angels, and heard that comfortable, that reviving Message, Matth 28. 5, 6. Fear not ye; ye feek Jejus which was Crucified : He is not here, for be is rifen . These dearest Lord. were moving Objects, which thy Providence did not think fit to give me a bodily Sight of, but I behold them all by a distinct and undoubted Faith. I see the Pledges and Memorial, of them daily in thy bleffed Sacraments: and, though I was not allowed to kiss thy Scars, and drop my Tears into the Print of the Spear and Nails, yet, as oft as I approach thy Table with deep Remorfe and due Reverence, I there weep over thy crucified Body, there contemplate the Pangs of thy bitter Death, there rejoice in the Triumphs of thy Resurrection, there receive the effectual Representation of all thou hast done and suffered for me; and by a Holy Union with Thee and all thy Members: attain a greater Priviledge than any Conversation with thee in the Days of thy Flesh could have conferr'd. Thou art to all Intents the fame Saviour, and if they that faw Thee were Bleffed, because they believed, yet thy own Mouth declar'd them them no less bleffed, John 20. 29. who bave not

feen and yet bave believed.

But still the Sight of Thee, of thy Beauties and thy Glory, is the constant Desire the only End, and noble Reward of our Faith; and, in this cloudy disconsolate Interval, till that can be obtained my Soul finds itself frequently at a Loss how to express itself, what to do, whither to bend its Courle, or where to find its much beloved Lord. Who shall tell my Spoule how I languish for him? How my Joy is turned into Heaviness, and my Laughter into Mourning, for want of his dear Presence? Psal 73. 26. My flesh and my beart faileth, but God is the strength of my beart, and my portion for ever. My Soul refuieth Comfort from any other Hand but thine, my Joy and Treasure. 73. 25. For whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I defire besides thee. Thou hast commanded me to seek thy Face, my Heart most readily replies Plal 27. 8. Thy face Lord will I feek : O turn not thy face from me, nor cast away thy servant in displeasure.
O most affectionate lover of Souls 10. 14. The

O most affectionate lover of Souls 10. 14. The Poor committeth himself, unto Thee, and thou art the Helper of the Fatherless. O my most faithful Guardian, preserve and pity me; I am an Orphan destitute of Friends, and my Soul is in a state of Poverty and Widowhood. Look upon the Tears. I shed for thy Absence in this desolate Condition; and come, Lord Jesus, come unto me puickly, that I may be comforted: Shew me thy Face.

and

and I shall be satisfied; discover thy Glory and my Joy shall be sull. Psal 42. 1, 2. My Flesh and my Soul thirst and pant for Thee the living God, the Fountain of Life: O when shall I come and

appear before God ?

When will my Comforter, whom I earnestly look for, make his Approaches to me? When,O when, shall I feel the Joy I so passionately defire, and be filled with the Pleasures of that glorious Dwelling, which I hope to reach at the end of this wearisome Journey of Life? Pial 65 4. Lord, if I may not yet drink of the river of thy pleasures, let me at least drink of the brook in the way. 110. 7. Let my Tears be my Meat and Drink Day and Night, till the Dawn of that glorious Morning, when my Soul shall be awakened with that most welcome Call, Behold thy Spoule, thy Lord, the Marriage of the Lamb is come. All I prefume to ask at prefent is Refreshment and Support under my Sorrows, and that these may be such as will one Day be turned into Joy, for I know that my Redeemer will come, because he is merciful and true; nor will he suspend my Happiness by unnecessary delays, Psal 8. 17. because he loves those that love him, and they that feek him early sball be sure to find bim. To whom therefore be Glory and Praise for ever and ever. Amen.

The End of the Meditations.

St. AUGUSTINE

difficulty to the ArtoW Steels as biscop of which be

OF THE LOVE OF GOD:

OR

His Second Book of Meditations.

BOOK II.

CHAP, I.

Love, the Way that leadeth to Life,

By what means we may avoid the Torments of Hell, and attain the Joys of Heaven, is an Enquiry which deserves our most attentive Application of Thought; a Science to be learned at the Expence of our most watchful Care, and most solicitous Concern. And in this Study it is of great Consequence to set out right. For all our most assidious Endeavours will be employ'd to very little Purpose, if we be not first instructed what Way it is that leads to everlasting Bliss, and carries us out from all Danger of everlasting Misery. It will therefore behove us very diligently

diligently to consider those Words of the Apostle in I Corii. 9. which taken in their just Latitude. do plainly teach us these two things: First, that the Glories of the bleffed in a future State, are greater than can be express'd; and then. Secondly. what is the Way, by which we must arrive at this Blessedness. 1 Cor 2. 9. Eye, he says, bath not feen, nor ear heard. neither bath it entred into the beart of Man, to concive the things that God bath prepared for them that love bim. Now when he tells us, that these excellent things are prepared for them that love God, from thence the Inference is natural and plain, that Love is the Condition enjoyn'd, in order to obtain them. But then the Scripture makes it no less evident, that the Love of God and the Love of our Neighbours are Virtues inseparable from each other. For thus much is the Importance of that passage in St. John. I John 4. 20, 21. He that loveth not his brother whom be bath feen, how can be love God whom he never bath feen ? And this commandment bave we from him, that he who leveth God loveth his brother alfo. In these two Parts it feems that true Charity confifts, to which St. Paul hath given so glorious a Character, when he shuts up his discourte of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, with these remarkable Words, I Cor 12. 31. And yet shew I you, a more excellent way. Charity then is not only the way, but the best, nay, the only way, that leads to our heavenly Country; for it is impossible for any Man ever

to come thither by any other way? But, who is it that knows, or walks in this way Even He that loves God and his Brother. It will concern us then to be perfectly well inform'd, what are the proper Expressions of our Love to each, and the just Measures of our Affection to God and to our Neighbour. And of this Point it may suffice to fay, that we are bound in Duty to love God more than ourselves; and to love our Neighbour as our selves, Now we love God more than ourfelves, when upon all occasions we prefer His Will before our own, and suffer no privateInterest or fenfual Inclination to come in Competition with his Commands and his Honour. But it is very observable, that we are enjoyn'd to love our Neighbour as our felves yet we are no where enjoin'd to love him as much aswe do our felves. And therefore our Duty in this respect is satisfi'd when we heartily wish and endeavour all that good to our Neighbour, which we ought to wish and endeavour the attainment of our felves: Especially the everlasting happiness of the Soul: When we contribute to his obtaining it; and omit no instance, whereby our Help may be of any use to him, in procuring any advantage, whether Temporal or Spiritual; so far as the present Circumstances of Affairs render our Assistance feafonable, and our own Condition puts it in one Power to become servicable to him. This Explication agrees exactly with the Equity of our Lord's Rule Matth 7. 12. Whatfoever ye would that

that Men should do unto you, do you even so to them:
And it shews us likewise the necessity of that other left us by St. John. I Joh 3. 18. Let us not love in word, nor in tongue. but in deed and in truth, But it may be asked once more, who those Neighbours are whom we are bound to love after this Manner. And to this the Answer is very Short, That the Commandment is of unlimited Extent, and comprehends all Mankind: Whether they be Christians, or Jews, or Insidels; whether they be Acquaintance or Strangers, whether they be Friends or Enemies.

CHAP. II.

Upon what accounts, and in what manner we ought to love God.

But in regard this Duty is of such infinite consequence, and that the whole of our Hopes and happiness depends upon the due Performance of it, it is very necessary that we consider diligently, what are the grounds of this Obligation, and by what means it may be Discharged. Now no thing will conduce to the begetting, cherishing, and heightning in our Minds a holy Love towards God, so much as a frequent Recollection, and just Estimate of his wonderful Goodness, and innumerable Benefits to us, For indeed the Blessings he gives us of his own meet Motion are so many and so great; and the Recompence

compence he makes us in return for any Services we pay him, is so exceeding disproportionate to what we have reason to expect, that our Souls must of necessity be at a Loss, and perfectly confounded with Amazement at the Number and Value of the Favours we receive at his Hands. But though these are so inestimably great, that it is impossible for us to make such a return of Love, and Thanks, and Obedience, as they deferve, yet fure it is, we are bound to make the best we can, and by our Diligence to pay to the utmost of our Ability, demonstrate, that the vast Arrear behind stands still charged to account, not from any Want of Will, but mearly for the want of Power, to clear so great a Debt, And thus my Soul, thou haft an answer to the first Enquiry propounded in this Chapter, which was concerning the Ground of this Duty. For therefore is our Lord to be most affectionately loved by us, because he is so wonderfully compassionate and tender, so kind and bountiful, and poureth out his Benefits upon us in such Abundance. And all this, not from any manner of worth in Us, that might engage his favour, but of his own good Will, and meer Motion; of which we are able to render no other reason, but only this, that he will bave mercy, because be delights in, and will bave mercy.

The other, How this God is to be loved, that Command which enjoins the Duty, makes sufficiently Plain. And what a strict observance of this

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Command is required from us, we may eafily infer from the Terms in which it is Expressed, and the Solemnity used in laying it upon us, Hear then, O Man, the first and greatest Commandment: Hearken to it attentively, remember it Exactly, meditate upon it incessantly, and use thy very utmost efforts to fulfil it with out delay without intermission, without end, or ever suppoling thou halt done so much, that thou art at liberty to defift from any fresh instances of thy regard to it. All this is imply'd in that awakening Preface, by which God introduces it, Deut 6. 4. Hear, O Ifrael, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Now the Commandment itself runs thus, Matth 12. 29.30. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy beart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy strength: Which is as much as to fay, that our intellectual Faculties, the Understanding, and the Will, and the Memory, should be fixed on This, as on their best and proper Object; that God thould be the subject of our Study that he should preside over all our Inclinations; be the ultimate End of all our Defires; dwell always in our Thoughts; and reign supreme as the governing Principle of all our Actions. In a word that we should contemplate, and chuse, and remember, and reverence, Him above all, and make it our business to live to Him alone.

How Men come so easily to satisfy themselves, with being so extreamly negligent in this most necessary Branch of their Obedience, is very diffi-

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cult to conceive; except it be from hence, that wanting a due lense of the greatness of God's Love they proportion their regard to Him according to their own scanty Notions of His Goodness toward them. And therefore, for preventing of this fault in Thee, do thou my Soul, attend with reverence, and thankfully recollect the innumerable Benefits, which he hath bestowed upon thee; The many precious Promises he hath made thee: And then I doubt not but what thou hast already and what thou art warranted to hope for hereafter, will fufficiently convince thee, that thou art under the highest Obligations to love God with a most fervent and entire Affection. Now, in order to exercise and increase this Love the more effectually, begin thy Confiderations where God began the Expressions of his Goodness, and think feriously within thyself, by whom, upon what Motive, and to what purpose Man was created. and what things God was pleased to create besides for the fake and fervice of Man.

First then. We must understand, that there is but one Cause which produced all created Beings, whether they be things in Heaven, or things in Earth, whether they be visible or invisible. That this Sole, this Universal Cause, was no other than the Goodness of thy Creator, who is the one true God: Whose Escential Goodness is so large, and so communicative, that he was pleased to make others Partakers of that Blessedness, which he enjoys from and to all Eternity, and which he saw capable

capable of being imparted, without any poffibility of fuffering Diminution by being thus d ffufed. That Good therefore, which is his very Na. ture, and wherein his own Happiness consists. he did thus shed abroad, not by Necessity but by free Choice; because it is the property of the Supreme Good to will the Good of others, and the excellence of Supreme Power to exert itself, not to the Prejudice, but to the Benefit of all that are subject to it. Now because this Blessedness of God cannot be any otherwise partaken of, but by being understood; and the more perfectly it is understood, the more plentifully it is imparted, God was pleased to make rational Creatures, and to give to such a Capacity of Understanding the Supreme Good of having what they thus underfood, of possessing this best object of their Love, and of enjoying what they so possessed. This rational Part of Creation is so ordered, that Part of it retains its effential Purity, without being united to any bodily Substance; and such are the Angels: Another Part there is joyned to Body, and fuch is the Soul of Man. Rational Creatures then are either Incorporeal or Corporeal. the Incorporeal are Angels, for these are simple Spirits. The Corporeal are Men, so called, because the human Nature confifts not only of a reasonable Soul, but also of a fleshly Body. So then, that the rational Creature had any, and that it had particularly this kind of Existance, is to be Imputed wholly to the Goodness of Almighty God, as its original

original impulsive Cause. Men then and Angels both were created by the Goodness of God. For we therefore are at all, because God is good, and the whole of that Being we receive from God is good. But to what purpose were these rational Creatures made? Surely to Praise God, and to love him and to enjoy him; in all which not the Creator's but the Creatures Advantage is confulted For God is absolutely perfect and happy in himself, and cannot receive either Addition or Diminution from any of the Works of his own Hands. The only Uses then that can be served by making such Creatures as these, and the only Account that can be given, why they were made at all, must be the Illustration of the Creator's Goodness, and the promoting of the Creatur's Happinels. When therefore the Question is asked, Why or to what end rational Creatures were made, the true Answer undoubtedly is this, that they were made because God was good, and to the intent they might be happy. For what can conduce to their Happiness so much, as to serve him; and to enjoy him?

CHAP. III.

How God made all things for Man,

W HEN God is said to have made Angels or Men for himself, we must not so mistake this expression, as sondly to imagine, that

that He who made both had any need of either: Or that the Acknowledgments and Services which he gave them the Capacity of paying, are any Addition to the Fulness of his Bliss and Glory. For how unworthily should we conceive of our Creator's Majesty, by thinking that any thing which we call Ours, or is most valuable in us. could increase or take away from his Blessedness? No. He made us to serve him, but it was because his Service is Freedom, is an Honour, and to be fuch Subjects, is to be truly Kings. This Service redounds wholly to the Profit of him that pays it, but not at all to his, to whom it is paid. And, as God made Man for himself, so did he likewise make the World for Man; that is so as to minither to Man's Use and Comfort. Man then is plac'd in a middle and Subordinate Station, fo as to be under Authority himself, yet to have Servants under him too: And thus all Things are most admirably contriv'd to our Advantage, when both the Homage we pay, and that which is paid to us, flows into one commonChannel, and all unites at last to our Advantage, as in its proper Centre. God will be ferved by Man, for this Reason, that not He, but Man may reap the Benefit of that Service : Again, God will have man ferved by the World, that by this Service also Man may be the Gainer. So that we may with all due Reverence fay, that the whole Defign of the Creation, and every Part of it, may be at last reduced to the Happiness of Man; fince

fince both that which was made for him, and that for which himself was made, do mutually conspire to make him happy. Thus all things. as the Apostle I Cor. 5.21. fays, are ours ; when ther they be Things above us or upon a level with us, or below us, The Things above us are for our Enjoyment, and fuch is God. Those on the level with us are for our Society, and fuch are Angels whom I prefume to call our Equals, nor only with regard to the same rational Nature but chiefly in Prospect of our future State: For we are affured, that however they be now in feveral Respects superior to us, yet in the next World, Matth 22. 30. the Children of the Resurrection shall be os they are, and shall live with them for ever in Heaven. The Things below us are like ours, for we have the Use and convenience of them, as the Mafters Goods are, in a true but qualified Sense, said to be their Servants. Not that this gives them a property exclusive of their Masters, but extends the Benefit and Priviledge of using them. Nay, even the Angels, in some Paslages of Scripture, are faid to do us Service; nor did the Apostle think it any Disparagement to their Character and Dignity, when he called them Heb 1. 14. All ministring Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be beirs of salvation. A very great Honour this, but such as we ought not to make any Difficulty of believing to be done to us, when we reflect upon that so much more aftonishing condescention of the Creator, and

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and King of Angels, who describes the end of of his coming into the World in those very humble Terms, Matth 20. 28. that he came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and give bis life a ransom for many. The Angels are faid to offer up our Prayers to God. Nor that they instruct him what we do, or what we ask; for he knows all Things exactly as they are, even before they are: And therefore cannot poslibly be ignorant of them afterwards. But they attend his Pleasure upon these Occasians, execute his Orders, and what they knew God hath decreed, are formetimes Instruments of accomplishing, and sometimes Messengers too to give the Parties concerned Notice of. Tob 12. 15. Thus the Angel tells Tobias, that he brought the remembrance of his Prayers before the boly one, and that there are spirits whose Office it is, to present the prayers of the faints, and to go in and out before the throne of God. And all this in a Sense very agreeable to what we do when we Pray. For neither this religious Exercise designed to inform God of our wishes or our wants; but it is necessary, that reasonable Creatures should refer all their temporal Occasions to the Judgment and Disposal of eternal Truth: Either by asking what they think fit to be done for them, Or defiring to know what he fees fit to be done with them. So that a Principle of marvelous Charity invites the Holy Angels from their Mansions of Bliss in Heaven, that they may suggest good Counsel in our Difficulties, that

Sufferings, and that they may succour us in our Conflicts and Dangers. All which good Offices they perform with the greatest Chearfulness and vigilence imaginable; upon God's, upon Ours, and upon their Own accounts. Upon God's, because they behold with Delight, and to their Power do, as becomes them, imitate, the Largeness of his Bowels, and infinite Bounty to us. Upon Ours because they love and admire that Resemblance of their own Excellencies, which appear in our Nature. And upon their Own, because they hope and wish to see their Numbers recruited by the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and received into the place of the fallen Angels.

CHAP, IV.

Of the Love of God towards us.

fhould take a distinct View of himself, and when he is arrived at a due understanding of the honourable Post God hath placed him in, that he be careful not to dishonour himself, nor injure his Maker, by settling his Affections upon things that are below or unworthy of his Character. For Objects, which considered singly and separately, may appear beautiful and lovely, do yet deservedly sink in Esteem, when compared with others confessedly more excellent. It argues

great Folly, to put things manifestly deform'd and vile upon the level with fuch as are amiable and handsome; and it is a Point of Wildom to raife those which have a noble and real Excellence and neither depending upon meer Fancy, nor of the meanest Rank of Beauties, to an equal Degree with the highest and most eminently Good. Confider then my Soul, what Excellencies thou art endued with, and from hence take thy Measures, that what Excellencies those are, that deferve thy Love. Now, if through Negligence, or long Difuse of the most excellent Objects thy Eyes are so far blinded, that thou canst not entertain fuch lofty Ideas of thy own Condition, as the Case requires; yet, thus far at least conquer thy own Prejudices, as to learn to make a Just Estimate of thyselfe, by the Judgment which another hath made of thee. And for this thou canst not want opportunity, because the Matter is plain, as to give thee sufficient Direction. Thou haft aLord and Spouse, but how exquisitely beautiful, as yet thou dost not perfectly know, because thou haft not feen his Face. He fees and knows thee thoroughly; for had he not done fo, he would not Love thee. He hath not thought fit hitherto to present himself to thee, but he hath made thee many noble Presents; and given thee such Pledges of his Kindness, as might at once be both Asfurance and Signs, who it is, that hath betrothed thee to himself, and how exceeding tender that Affection is, which moved him to this Union. Couldst

Couldst thou behold his Charms, there could be no longer ground of doubt. For thou wouldst be convinced, that One fo fair, fo heavenly Sweet, One of such matchless Excellence, could not be fmitten with thee, were there not in thy form fomewhat very graceful, very uncommon, to recommend thee, and engage his Love. But in the mean while, how dost thou behave thyself upon this Occfion? See him face to face thou canst not because he is absent : And is this a sufficient Reason for not paying him Reverence, for insolently and shamelessly Affronting him, for flighting that Love which thou canst not but See, and Impudently proftituting thyself to the Lusts of seducing Strangers? O do not treat him after this Contemtuous manner! If thou canst not as yet know all the Charms of thy Lover, yet thou canst understand the valuable instances of his Love, These are already actually in thy Possession; and, if considered as they ought, will plainly shew thee, what returns of Love it becomes thee to make, and how exstreamly solicitous thou oughtest to be, not to displease, not to despise, not to lose him, or his Favour. The Pledge he hath given thee is most extraordinary: A noble Gift fuitable to the Majesty of the Giver. And, as it was below fo great a Person to bestow a thingof little Value; so were it noless unbecoming so wife a Person, to throw away things of the highest Value upon one, in whom there was little or nothing Valuable. Great therefore is the present he hath

hath made, but greater still in his Esteem is that, which he loves in Thee, and which induced him

to give it.

But thou perhaps wilt ask, my Soul, what this great Gift is, which thy Spoule hath shewed himfelf fo very Beautiful, in bestowing upon thee. Look round this Universe, view every part of it, and tell me if thou canst there discover any thing which does not some way or other do thee Service. Is not this the End. to which every Creature feems to have been Defigned? And does not the Whole course of Nature plainly promote it? The gratifying thy Desires, the bringing in thy Profit, the supply of thy Wants, the furnishing store for thy Comforts and Delight, the doing all this in great abundance, and confulting not barely thy Necessities, but even thy Ease and Pleasure: This is what the Heavens, the Earth, the Air, the Sea, and all the Inhabitants and Products of each of them, are with a cuntinual and most officiousDiligence employed about. The regular Revolutions of Time, the various feafons of the Year, the stated Successions of Night and Day, by which the World dies and revives, grows old and young again, its Fabrick ruined and repair'd, its Provision confumed and recruited; all is contrived so admirably for thy Purpose, that, as none of these Vicissitudes are useles, so one cannot conceive how any of them could be spared, without some manifest, some insupportable Inconvenience. This I suppose thee sensible of ; but art thou

thou not sensible at the same time, who it is that framed and contrived this wonderful Order, and disposed every part so advantageously, that whatever discord appears between each other, yet all are unanimous in promoting the common Defign, and conspire to do thee Service? How brutish is it to feed upon the benefit, and remain ignorant of thy Benefactor? The Gift is evident and is the Giver a fecret? Nay, thy own reason will not allow thee so vain an Imagination, as, that these advantages are upon any account thy due, or of thy own procuring, but loudly tells thee thou owest them all to the Liberality of another, Now be that who it will, to whose Bounty thou art so largely indebted, 'tis plain He hath given us much; no lets plain, that He, who gave fo much would not have done it, had he not loved much. So the Greatness of his Affection, and the indispensible Obligation to ours in return, are both of them demonstrable from the Quality of his Gift, Now how extravagantly foolish is it, not to desire the love of One, who hath it in his Power to be so excellent a Friend? Not to do it of our own accord, and in regard to our Interest, though there were no antecedent Obligation? But how impious, how perverse, how base, not to love him in return, who hath been fo inexprestibly kind to Us? If then thou lovest other things besides. do it with such Limitations as are proper; maintain Thy Character, and remember Theirs; Love them as Things below thee; as Tokens of thy Spouse's Love, the Gift of a Friend, the Bounty of a Master but be sure never to forget whose Goodness all these Blessings are owing to, and therefore be not fond of them, for their own Sake; but for His Sake who bestowed them. Nor let them divide thy Affections with the Donor, for to take them into thy Heart together with him, is a Wrong and great Indignity; and therefore They must be loved for Him, but He by and for Them, and infinitely above them all.

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Of the Fruition of God.

Take heed, my Soul, that thou incur not the reproach of a Harlot, by doing like those common Prostitutes, who have no Principle but Prosit, and value the Price of the Gist much more than the Affection of the Giver. Thou can't not be guilty of a more infamous, a more injurious Affront, than to accept and live upon his Presents, and not to return his Love, Consider well the Value of what thou hast received; or if thou art not, as indeed thou art not able, truly to estimate the Greatness of his Bounty, consider however the Advantage of loving him in return. Love him for his own sake; love thy self for his sake; love Him that thou may'st

enjoy and be happy in him; love thyfelf that he may love Thee. Love him in the good things he hath bestowed upon thee; love him for thy own fake, and thyself for his sake. This is pure and chaste Love, debased with no fordid Interest, embittered with no Torment, but delightful and generous, firm and lafting. Think, and recollect diligently, my Soul, what Mercies thou hast received in common with all Mankind; what special Marks of Favour, of which All are not allowed to partake; what others, which are peculiar to thyself alone. He hath loved thee in common with all thy Fellow creatures; He hath diftinguished thee from many of them by fingular Bleffings; He hath shewed the same Affection to thee with all good Men; He hath preferred thee before all evil Men; and, if the being prefered before the Evil seem a small thing, reflect farther, how many good Men there are, whose Blesfings have come far short of thine.

CHAP. VI.

The Mercies of Creation and Regeneration.

I Irst then, my Soul, remember that there was a Time when thou wert not at all; and that thou ever didst begin to be, is the free Gift of God. Thy very Being then is an Instance of his Bounty. But was it possible, that, before thou hadst

a Being, thou shouldst give any thing to God. which could oblige him to give thee that Being, by way of Recompence for any former Kindness on thy Part? No certainly; 'tis manifest thou didft not, couldft not deserve any thing at his Hands, while thou thyfelf as yet wert not any thing, Had then his Liberality stopp'd there, and given thee Being only; yet this fingle Bleffing is great enough to challenge thy continual Praise and Love. But he hath given thee a great deal more than bare Existance, by making thee a beautiful and a glorious Creature. Nor did the Munificence of this noble Benefactor content itself with an inferior Degree of Beauty; for he hath wrought thee up to the highest degree of Perfection, and formed thee into a Resemblance of his own divine Excellencies. thus hath he drawn those Hearts to him by a Likeness of Nature, which he hath attracted by the Engagements of his Love. He gave us Being, and Beauty; and Life, that by Existence we might excel those things that are not; by our Form, those that are rude, unfinished, or deformed; and by our Life, those things that are inanimate. How deeply then art thou indebted, O my Soul, to Him, from whom thou haftReceived much, when yet thou hadft nothing of thy own; and, having nothing of thy own, hast nothing in thy Power to make Requiral with but only to love him, who gave thee all thou haft? For, in Recompence of that which was given thee out of pure Love, thou canst not make any less less, thou canst not make any greater Returns than that of loving again. And evident it is, that there couldnot be any other inducement for bestowing all these Benefits, but the free Love of God alone.

But now I will open another and more amazing Scene of Kindness, by shewing thee, how low this Lord and Spouse of thine, whose Majefly shone so gloriously bright in thy Creation, was pleased to condescend in the Work of thy Regeneration: In the Former he appeared fo high and noble, and in the Latter so humble, that it is not easy to determine, whether of these two Extreams is a more worthy Subject of thy Wonder and Praise. In the former his Power was illustrious, who conferred fuch glorious Priviledges upon thee; in the Latter his Mercy was no less illustrious, who submitted to endure such bitter Things for thee, that he might raise thee up from the Depth of Milery, into which thou hadft funk thyfelf, himfelf vouchfafed to descend into the same Pit, where thou layest groveling and unable to help thyfelf; and the Mifery which thou didst then sustain, he was content in pity to undergo, that a Way might be made for Justice to be satisfied with the Restitution of the Happiness thou hadst lost. He came down, he took upon himfelf, he endured, he vanquished, he restored. He came down from the Throne of God to wretched Mortals: He took upon himself Mortality; he endured Affliction, and Pain, and Ignominy ;

Ignominy; he vanpuished Death, he restored Mankind. Stand still, my Soul, and with a holy Astonishment gaze on this Series of Wonders, this inestimable Complication of Mercies. Confider the greatness of his Love, who did not grudge to do so much for thee: He made thee beautiful at first, but thou hadst sullied and deformed thyfelf by Sin. Notwithstandind this Dishonour done to the Charms thou hast received from Him, thy Stains are washed away, and the Purity of thy former Complexion senewed again, by his marvellous Compassion Thus was his Love the sole Cause both of the Gift at first, and of its Restitution. When thou hadft no Being. his Love created thee: When thou hadft defaced his glorious Image, his Love refreshed the Impression; and to demonstrate how exceedingly he loved thee, he willingly delivered thee from Death, when that could be done at no less Expence, than the laying down his ownLife. He wouldnot do it at a cheaper rate, that so the Price might demonstrate the vehemence of his Affection, no less than the Value of the Advantages purchased with it. A mighty Favour no doubt it was, that the first Man received from his merciful Creator, when the Gen. 1 26. 2. 7. breath of life was breathed into bim, and be became a living foul, like the God who made him, But how much greater was the Condescension, how much more valuable the Blesfing, when for the Man that he had made, God afterwards gave himself? I acknowledge it a great thing,

thing that Iam God's Handy-work, and own the Greatitude due upon this account; but fure a great deal more is due, when I confider, that God was pleased to make himself my Ransom. For this there is so much expended upon our Redemption asmight almost incline us to believe. that Man is a valuable Confideration for even God himself. O how strangely hath Light sprung out of Darkness! How happy an Event was my Guilt attended with ! for the purging whereof, while this Love of mySaviour disposes him, that Love is opened to my Desires; and if I do but give him My Heart, I am secure of an easy Access to, and a sure Place in His, Had my Misery and Danger been less, I never could have had so noble a Proof of his Kindness, Have I not Reason then in some respects to bles that Fall, from which I rise with greater Advantage that if I had not fallen at all? No Kindness could be more. none more fincere, more chafte, more fervent, more paffionately express'd, than that of an innocent Person dying for me, who had no Recommendation to deserve, none to engage his Love. What was it then, my dearest Lord, that thou didft love in me? What that thou lovedft fo much, as even to die for me? What couldst thou find in this poor wretched Creature, worth doing so many Miracles of Goodness, worth suffering so many Injuries and Agonies? for I am perfectly amazed at this stupendous Dispensation, and the more I consider either Thee or myself, the

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the less I find myself able to account for it.

CHAP. VII.

The Mercy of being called to the true Faith.

HE Merit and Sufficiency of this Redemption extend to all Mankind, but the Means ordinarily necessary to render it effectual are not distributed with an even Hand. Here then, my Soul, observe to be thankful for a Discrimination manifestly in thy Favour. For how numerous, and of what Condition, if compared to Thee, are those many, who have not the precious Opportunities of that Grace which are allowed to Thee? Thou canfinot but have heard, how many Generations of Men, from the begining of the World down to this very Day, have lived and died without the knowledge of the true God; how many more did formerly, how many even now perish eternally, and never heard one Sylable of a Redemption purchased by the Blood of God. All these thy Saviour hath distinguished thee above, and fignalized his Love in granting those Means of Grace, which none of them were thought worthy to partake of. They were left in their Ignorance, and thou art taken to be made wife unto Salvation. But for this Difference there can be but one Reason assigned, which is the fame so often inculcated already, thy Blessed Master's Love. Thy Spouse, thy Friend, thy God, thy

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thy Redeemer chose Thee rather than them. He chose Thee among all: He fingled Thee from the rest: He hath given thee all possible Demonstrations of his Kindness: He hath called thee by his own Name, that this Mark and Memorial might rest perpetually upon Thee, that thou mightest never forget to whom Thou belongest: He hath not given Thee an empty Name, but all the Anvantages imported by, and accruing from it: He hath anointed thee with the same Oil of gladness with which himself was Anointed, that thou mightest be the Anointed of the Anointed, and from Christ, denominated in the most beneficial Sense, a Christian.

But whence is this to the Servant of thy Lord? Didst thou excel in Strength, in Wisdom, or noble Desert; in Riches, or Virtue, or any other Qualification, which might entitle thee to this special Favour, from which so many others are excluded? How many strong, how many wife, how many noble, how many rich Men have there been, who yet have all been pass'd over and rejected? This therefore is another Enhancement of the Favour, that They, notwithstanding all pompous Pretentions, were not admitted to the like Privileges with Thee, who hadst them not to aledge in thy behalf. Thou wert miserable and deformed, naked and poor, diffolute and fin-

ful, an Object of Abhorrence and Deteftation; yet did not thy God disdain Thee, but even in these wretched, these forbiding Circumstances,

extended to Thee the Riches of his marvellous Compassion and Grace. And now, my Soul, that thou hast seen thy Happiness, see also what the Duty is resulting from the Sense of it. For be alfured, that not with standing all these kind Advances, if thou do not make it thy constant Care and most earnest Eendeavour to deck and adorn thyself as becomes thee, thou shalt not be admitted into the Embraces of thy heavenly Spouse, Set then about this necessary Work while thou hast time; for now is the proper Season of dreffing thyfelf for the Marriage. Abate thy too folicitous Concern for the outward Appearance of thy Body, and employ all thy Pains upon thy inward Man: Set off thy Face in the best manner: Let thy Habit be clean and comely, thy Spots washed off, thy Complexion clear, thy Decays Blemishes refreshed, thy Air modest and graceful, thy Deportment orderly; and let it be thy chief, thy only Business, so to prepare and fit thyself for thy Lord's Approach, that the Figure thou makest may be suitable to thy Character, and become the Chastity, the Majesty of One, who hath the Honour of being a Bride to an immortal Husband, a heavenly King.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Communications of Divine Grace.

NOR let thy Poverty discourage thee, as if I now advise to an impossible Undertakings For this is yet a farther Instance of thy Lord's Love, that he furnishes thee with such Ornaments as he likes to fee thee in, and fuch as could not be procured any where elfe, did not his Bounty supply thee with them. From Him alone it is. that thou art put into a Condition of being cloathed with good Works, adorned with Almsdeeds. Watchings, and Fastings, and other acceptable Instances of Piety and Devotion. All which, like Garments of the richest Materials and most delightful Colours, make up the Drefs, and fet off the Beauties of a heavenly Soul. Whatever is neceffary for thy Health, whatever for thy Refreshment and Delight whatever can restore lost Beauty, or add to the Gracefulness of that which thou already haft, thou needest not want; for he hath Plenty of all, and distributes his Stores liberally. See now what a noble Provision is made for thee, and how abundant Care hath been taken for the Relief of all thy Necessities. At first thou wert possessed of nothing, and he imparted to thee what was fitting. This Gift through the Default was loft, and he restored it to thee. Thus art thou never forsaken in all thy Distresses; to convince thee how generous, how boundlefs an Affection thy Lover bears to thee. He will not lose thee, and therefore he waits with great Patience, for thy better Resolutions, and in much Pity grants thee frequent Opportunities of recovering again and again those preciousAdvantages, which through thy own Carelefnets were often forfeited

forfeited and gone. So that in all this Matter this remarkable Difference deserves to be thankfully confidered, that all the Damage thou sustainest is entirely from thyself, but all the Recruits of it are entirely from Him. And O! how many are there, who once received the same Advantages with Thee; but though equally favoured in the Gift at first, yet were deny'd the Privilege of having them restored when lost, which thou hast had so very often repeated by a particular Indulgence of thy gracious God to Thee above others? The Grace of doing well was never deny'd thee when thou wert as ready to receive and improve, as he constantly is to give it. And if rhou become an Instrument of great Good, it is his Merey that exalts the to this high Pitch of Virtue; But if thou find great Difficulties, and canst not attain to the Perfection thou labourest after and cagerly defireft, yet this should be esteem'd an Effect of Mercy too. For He knows best what is convenient for thee, and will make a more advantageous Choice than thou canst for thyself. And therefore the Way always to think well and worthily of God, is to be throughly perfuaded, that whatever he does with thee and thy Affairs, is wife and good. For fuch is the Love of God towards us, that there is not any One Trial which human Nature labours under, not any One Infirmity to which it is subject, not any Event that befals any one of us; but He in his infiniteGoodness, and so far as we do not obstruct his graci-0118 ous Intentions of Kindness, disposes it to our Advantage. It may be, thou hast not the Grace of an eminent and steady Virtue; but while the Storms of Temptation shake thee, that Inconvenience is compensated by thy Humility taking deeper Root. And Humility with an Allay of Frailties and Failings is more acceptable to Almighty God, than virtuous Actions puffed up with Vain-glory and spiritual Pride. When therefore thou observest any Dispensation of Providence, do not presume to think that some other Method or Event would have been better; but fear his Majesty, reverence his Wisdom, and make thy Prayers to Him with a Mind entirely refigned to his Will; Imploring his Protection and Affistance, in such Measures of Grace as he knows fittest for thee; that, if there be any Remains of Evil in thee, his Mercy would take them clear away; that whatever good Inclinations or Beginnings he fees in thee, he would promote and bring them to due Perfection; and in a word, that he would at last bring thee to himself, by such a Way as he shall find most agreeable to his own wife Purposes. For so thou do but attain the End, the means are what thou needest not be very solicitous about. That is the proper Object of thy Defires; but when thou extendest thy Defires to these too, they then exceed their just Bounds; and, if too anxious, take upon thee to prescribe to Providence. in things which God hath referved to his own free Disposal.

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CHAP.

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The Mercy of Instruction and Illumination.

ND now, my Soul, I must ask thee again and again, What Shall we render to the Lord our God, for the innumerable benefits he bath done unto us? Of which, that thou may'ft take another Prospect, consider that he does not only give us Cause to thank him for the same good Things which he bestows upon others, but makes the very Evils that befall us, Experiments of his exceeding great Love, that we in like manner might be moved to love him exceedingly, whether we reflect upon the Good we enjoy, or the Evil we endure, Thou. Lord, haft hadCompaffion on my Ignorance and Blindness; and by my Misery magnified thy Mercy, in bringing me to the Knowledge of Thee and thy Truth; and granting me a clearer Understanding in the dark and difficult Passages of thy revealed Will, than many others have arived at. Some of my Equals in Years and natural Abilities thou sufferest still to continue in Ignorance and Error; but my Eyes hast thou enlightened with thy Grace, and thereby made me wifer than the Aged. Thou haft endued me with strong Faculties, a large Capacity, a quick Apprehension, a faithful Memory. Thou givest Success to all my Undertakings, A-greeableness in Conversation, Improvement by my Studies, Comfort in my Advertity, Protection

in my Prosperity. Which Way soever I go, thy Grace prevents and follows me; and many times when I have given myfelf for loft, Thou haft by some sudden and surprizing Turn of Mercy delivered me from my Calamities and Fears. When I went wrong, thou hast brought me back and guided me in the right Way: When I offended thou halt reproved and chastned me: When I was in Heaviness, thou hast supported mySpirits: When I fell thou hast set me up again: When I stood, thou upheldest me: Thou didst enable me to know thee more truly, to believe in thee more stedfastly, to love thee more vehemently, to follow thee more eagerly. And now. O Lord my God. the Joy of my Life, the Light of my Eyes, What Requital shall I make thee for all thy inestimable Mercies? Thou commandest me to love thee, but how can I ever love thee enough? Nay, who am I indeed that thou shouldst desire or accept of my Love? For Thou Lord art my Strength and my Castle, my Deliverer and my Refuge, my Helper and Protector, the Horn of my Salvation, my Support, my All; and, in a word, for that comprehends the whole of what Ican fay or think Thou, O Lord, art my God; and whatever I have or can do, or am, is of Thee, and in Thee, and by Thee.

CHAP, X.

God's tender Care, and constant Presence with us. STILL

OTILL I must repeat my gratefull Acknowledgment; that the Bleffings I have received from Thee are great beyond Measure, and many beyond Number. Of these it shall be my most delightful Entertainment always to be talking; and, Lord, I beseech thee, grant me a Mind truly thankful, that my Mouth may be ever full of thy Praise, and my Heart overflow with thy Love, for thy infinite Goodness to me. Thou seeft, my Soul, what noble Pledges thou haft; and these Pledges sufficiently declare the Affection of that Spoule, who gave them. Take care to preserve thy Charity and Fidelity entire. Let no impure Desires, no adulterous Lust pollute or divide thy Affections; but keep thee only unto Him to the last Moment of thy Life, If thou wert formerly a Harlot, yet now thy virginInnocence is restored. For such is the Excellence of his wonderful Love, that it restores purity to them that have lost it, and preserves it unblemished to them who are careful to retain it. Let then the Greatness of his Mercy never flip out of thy Mind, but confider how tenderly He loves thee, who never was wanting to thee in any Demonstration of his Kindness, which thy Condition required. I cannot but confefs, when I reflect upon the constant Presence, and the abundance of his Mercies towards me, that I am almost sempted to fay, That my Salvation is his only Business and Care. For sure he could not be more tender of my Safety, more ready to relieve all my distresses, to comfort all my Sorrows, to supply all my Wants, to guard me in all my Dangers, could he be supposed to overlook the Exigencies of all his other Creatures, and confine his good Providence to me alone. So warchful does he shew himself over all my Affairs; fo ever present to, nay ever preventing my earliest Wishes. Wheresoever I go, he fortakes me not; wherefoever I am, he stands by me, ; whatfoever I do, he strengthens and succours me. He is a constant Observer of all my Behaviour; and fuch is his Goodness, that whatever commendable Attempts I make he works together with me in him; and by the Success which I attain gradually, shews methat he condescends to work, not according to the Efficacy of his own almighty Power, but in proportion to my weak Capacity. These Instances make it mighty clear, that though the Imperfection of our present State will not allow us to see his Face, yet we cannot be so stupidly blind, as not to be sensible of his Presence. A Presence, which can nomore be concealed than it can be avoided.

But while my thoughts are engaged upon this Subject, I feel a new and unusual Pleasure, that makes such strong, such delightful impressions, as seem to transport and carry me out of myself. Methinks I am in an instant changed, and become quite another Creature, and Joys come flowing in upon me, more exquisite than I am able to express. My Conscience is all over Satisfaction; the Anguish of my past Sufferings is quite swallowed

lowed up, and not so much as a troublesome Remembrance of rhem left behind. My Mind is enlarged, my Understanding clear and bright. my Heart and its Affections enlightned and purified, all my Desires filled with Pleasure, and my Soul is perfect Rapture and Triumph, I am no longer here methinks, but translated, I know not bow, nor whither, to some unknown Region of Blifs, I embrace, as it were, with a most ardent Love, some dear Object with which I am not yet perfectly acquainted . I hold him fast, and strive all I can never to part with him more; but still it is with a fort of delightful Difficulty, that I fruggle not to let that break from me, which of all things I wish to keep for ever in my Arms. For in Him my Soul feems to have found the Complement and end of all her Defires. This Thought creates that eager and inexpressible Transport of joy: that she seeks nothing, covets nothing beyond it, but would esteem her Happiness compleat, could she continue always to be as now the is. What can this delicious Object be, that pours in such a torrent of Raptures and uncorrupted Pleasures? It is my beloved? Undoubtedly it can be none but He. 'Tis thus my Lord vouchsafes to visit me. He comes in secret not to be teen, not to be difcerned by any of my Senfes. He comes to touch me but not to shew me his Face. He comes to put me in mind of him, but not to let me persectly understand him. He comes to me to give me a Tafte of his Sweetness, but not

to give me his whole felf; to gratify my Defires. but not to bestow upon me the fulness of his Excellencies. However, this is what my condition will admit, what I ought to receive with all the Thanks and Gladness possible: For it is an affured foretaste of Heaven, an inviolable Earnest and Token of his marrying me to himself. And bleffed, ever bleffed, be thy Mercy, for this Affurance, these comfortable Antipasts of future Happiness: Thou, Lord, art good and gracious, and canst not worthily be praised, for those supporting Consolations, whereby Thou who hast promiled, that my Soul shall have a distinct View and Possession of thee hereafter, dost convince her, how sweet that Enjoyment and how precious the Promises of it are, by condescending to give her a Tafte of thee here.

CHAP. XI.

The Benefit of our Bodily Senses and the Preservation of our Lives.

I OW fervently then oughtest thou, mySoul, to love this good God, who hath been so exceeding kind to thee! Nor am I yet or ever should I be at an End, did I undertake to recount all his Benefits. But, to keep close to what thou canst not sure but feel and see daily and hoursly, it shall be next my endeavour to kindle and san this divineFlame, by putting thee in mind of such

as thou carrieft about with thee. and art thyfelf a living monument of. Consider then, what Praise. what thanks, what devout Zeal are due to Him, who converted the Desires of my Parents, which. fince the corruption of human Nature, are tainted and debaced with an allay of impurity, to a profitable Purpose; and made use of these for creating me of their Substance: Who breathed into me the Breath of Life, brought me to just Maturity for Birth, and put a Difference betwixt me and those, which perished by untimely Abortion, or strangled at the Gate of the Womb, feem to have conceived for Death rather than Life. It is of his Mercy alone, that I am; it is a yet more valuable effect of the same Mercy that I am a Man; that I was endued with an understanding Spirit, which makes a very advantageou Distinction between Me and the Brutes. To the same Mercy I owe the comely Form of this Body, and the perfect Use of those several Organs of Sense, so commodiously Placed in it. Hence I have Eyes for feeing, Ears for hearing, Nostrils for smelling, Hands for handling, a Pallate for tasting, Feet for walking, and, which crowns all the rest, a healthfulConstitution for my unspeakablEase and Comfort. And is not this another most wonderful instance of Goodness, that God hath made fuch plentiful Provision for the Service, the Entertainment, the Delight of the Senses; and suited Objects so to the Organs, that each is proportioned to the Use and Convenience of that Senfe,

Sense, which it was defigned to gratify and minister unto? That there are many bright Bodies, many delightful Sounds, many fweet Smells, many grateful Relishes, many things that pleasingly affect the Touch. For this no doubt, the good Providence of God had in view, when he infused such different Qualities into Bodies created by him, that there should be no Sense of Man, which from thence might not find a Delight peculiar to it. And thus we fee, that Sight is qualified to perceive one Sort of Objects; Hearing, another; Tasting, another; and the Touch, a different Kind from all the former. The Beauty of Colours feeds the Sight; the Harmony of Sounds delight the Ears, the Fragrancy of Perfumes entertain our Smell, and the delicious Relishes our Tasts. And who can express the vast Variety of Impressions, with which our Senses are gratefully wrought upon? These are so many, and so different in each Sense singly, that if any One be confidered apart, one would think Providence had made it his Bulinels, to contrive Plenty of Amusements and Pleasures for That aloue. There is so inexpressible a Beauty in Colonrs to please the Eye, and so many charming Sounds of different Sorts to delight the Ear; Such a vast Usefulness attending those that are articulate, whereby Men without any Difficulty Communicate their Thoughts to one another, relate Things already pass'd, discourse of the present, predict the future, and disclose those that are secret

cret, and must otherwise continue unknown, that if Mankind were left destitute of these Conveniences, their Life would be but very little better than Beafts. If now to all the Advantages of Speech I should add those other Entertainments of this Sense, which result from the Choirs of Birds abroad, or from the Melody of human Voices, or from those improvements and imitations of natural Musick by Art and instruments; it must be allowed me, that the several Kinds of Harmony are of infinite Variety, of so great indeed they are, that the Wit of Man cannot conceive all the particular Kinds, norWords explain and describe them distinctly. And yet all these are contrived for the fingle Sense provided for. A great deal might be faid to the same Purpose, concerning the Objects pleasurable to the Taste and the Touch, But the Resemblance between the Case of these and the former is so great, that my Reader may easily make his Observations upon Them, by what hath already been said concerning Those.

And, as our Senses, and a right disposition of the Organs which serve them, is a very Valuable bleffing, so is it likewise, that our Limbs have all their due place and figure; that no part of our Body is so distorted, or deserve, as to be painful to our selves, or to make our deformity a Subject, either of Melancholy to our Friends and Relations, or of Jest and Scorn to Strangers. But, which is yet of higher importance, within this

Body

Body to commodiously ordered, I have a glorious Inhabitant, an understanding Spirit; capable of discerning and receiving the Truth; of distinguishing between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil; nay, which tends more to its Happiness and Perfection, qualified to feek and find its Creator, to defire and gasp after him, to praise. and cleave, and be united to him, by the cement of a most ardent and inviolable Love. Another great Instance of God's Goodness to me, I acknowledge it, that I was referved for the glorious times of the Gospel; born in a Country, where his holy, Truth is Professed; and among such Friends as took effectual care to instruct and establish me in the Faith, and make me a Partaker of the bleffed Sacraments. This is a Mercy which vast numbers of People have not enjoyed, and therefore I have still the greater reason to be thankful for it; fince their Condition and Mine are in other respects the same; nor can I boast of any Qualification that should give me the Preference, or recommend me to so singular a Favour, which hath not been in like manner extended to Them. The fum and fole Account of fo diftinguishing a Providence is this, that God was Just in leaving Them, but exceeding Gracious in calling Me. Nor ought I upon this occasion to forgetGod that he was pleased to spare my Parents Life, till the great butiness of my Education was finished; That the care of me was not turned over to Them who could not have the same Tenderness and

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and natural Affection for me; that I escaped the many dreadful Difasters, which others did, and I was equally liable to fuffer by: that the Fire hath never burnt and disfigured me, nor the Water swallowed me up; that Evil Spirits were never permitted to torment me; that God hath shut the Mouths of the Beafts of Prey, guarded me from their Violence, kept me back from many a dangerous Precipice, and preserved me from falls and Pits, loffes or mainings of Limbs, to which the giddiness of Childhood, and the heat and tolly of Youth are perpetually exposed: and lastly, that I was bred up all along in the true Faith and Obedience of Him, and his Will, till I arrived at Years of Discression, and made the service of God my Act and Choice, which I was dispofed to before by the Happy prepossession infused into me by Others.

CHAP, XII.

God's Long-fuffering and Mercy which preferv'd us from, and forgave us after, the Commission of Sin.

O great so numerous, O Lord my God, are the proofs which thou hast given me of thy marvelous Love! But, though I praise and adore thy Majesty ter all thy wondrous Works; yet art thou more justly to be admired for none, than for those Acts of goodness and tender Pity, which

which plainly speak the most enlarged bowel; of our Heavenly Father's paternal Affection, to his unworthy and rebellious Children, These are so unbounded, as to reach all without Distinction. For, thou despitest no Man, castest off no Man; abhorrest no Man, except such only, as by their own incorrigable folly have given thee Provocation, by first forfaking and contemning Thee. And therefore I, O Lord in particular, must own have many Mercies and much Indulgence of this kind to love and thank thee for. For thou haft frequently rescued me from Dangers, which had hemm'd me in on every Side, and left me no Power to escape by any Strength or Prudence of my own. When I was engaged in finful Actions, thou didft not leave me to perish in them: When Iforgot thee, Thou didft refresh my Memory: When I was falling off from thee, Thou didft recal and bring me home again: When I returned in obedience to that Call, thou didft receive and meet me with open Arms; and when my Soul was wounded with Grief for my former Transgressions, Thou didst comfort my Sorrow. pardon my Offences, accept my Repentance, and speak Peace to my troubled Mind. Nay, I should' detract from the Greatness of thy Mercy, in acknowledging the Benefit of so gracious a Pardon for my past actual Transgressions only; fince it is of the same mercy alone, that not only the Crimes really comme ted by me, but all those too which I should have committed, hadnot thy grace and good Providence restrain'd and protected me are not suffered to enslame my reckoning at the last terrible Day of Account. For, as I do with Shame and deep Remorse confess that the Sins I have fallen into are many and grievous; so am I sadly sensible of my own Weakness and Frailty, and that my Faults would have far exceeded what they now have done, had not thy watchful

Care and Goodness preserved me.

Now there are three Ways which I plainly perceive thou hast made use of to this purpose; and each hath greatly contributed to my Safety, These are the Removal of the Occasion, the Power of Refistance, and the Integrity of my Will and Affections. For without all dispute. I had been very frequently enfnared in Sin, had Temptaions and Opportunities offered themfelves thicker to me; But the good Providence of-God to ordered the matter, that many times I had no evil Suggestions prompting me to Wickedness, nor any Opportunity given the Tempter for an Affault Again, I have frequently found myfelt attacked with great Violence; but thou, O Lord, hast come to my Succour, and poured in fresh Recruits of Grace and Strength, whereby I was enabled to get the Mastery over my Appetites, and obstinately to hold out the Siege against the Treachery of my own corrupt Lusts, which would have betrayed and undermined me, and all the Fury of the Tempter, who laboured to form the Fort of my Soul But fome Sins again

again there have been, which thy Mercy, O Lord, hath kept me at so great a Distance from, that I perfectly abhor the very Thoughts of them, and never found myself so much as molested with any remptation to contract so black and detestable a Guilt.

O that this had been the Case with me in all things, that offend the God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity! But, where it was not, I have not wanted plentiful Experience of thy Goodness and Compaffion. For alas! my God, my Confcience reproaches me with having too often, and too heinously displeased thy Divine Majesty. Wretch that I am, I have behaved myself unfeemly in thy. Presence; I have done amis and dealt wickedly, provoked thy Anger, and deferved the hottest of thy Vengance, I have trans-gressed: and Thou hast born with it. I have finned long and perverfly, and still thou sufferest me to live. If I repent, thou sparest me: If I return, thou receivest me gladly. Nay, even while I dally and am so dillitary in this, my most important Concern, Thou waightest for my better and more ferious Thought. When I wander, thou bringest me back: When I refift thy gracious Method, Thou winnest me over, and inclinest my Will: When I am flothful thou quickenest and spurrest me on: When I slee to thee for Mercy, Thou readily extendest it. Thou instructest my ignorance, Thou driest up my Tears. supportest my drooping Spirits, raifest me up again when I tall, repairest

repairest my Breaches and inward Decays, grantest when I ask, art found when I feek thee, openeft when I knock, shewest me the right Way, and teachest me to walk in it, when thou hast disco-vered it to me. The Grace of being thus favoured upon my most solicitous Applications is indeed very great; but greater still is that, by which thy Liberality, O Lord, even prevents my Application to thee. And yet even those Gifts which I have received at thy bountiful Hand, before I could ask, or wish, or even think of them, are such, that should I attempt to declare, and speak of them particularly, they would be found more than I am able to express. Had these unask'd Benefits prevented my Requests and Wishes then only, when the Greenness of my Years and Understanding render'd me incapable of discerning my Wants, and addressing to thee for proper Supplies; This had been a Compassion in some degree necessary to the Ignorance of my Childhood, or the Inconfideration of my Youth. But, which enhances the Obligation yet more, I find the same Goodness following and even preventing me still, though arrived at an Age of Maturity and Judgment. When I am qualified to pre-Supplications suited to a due fent before thee Sense of my Wants, when I am in a Condition of feeking thee, and defiring and cleaving ftedfastly to thee, as my chief and only Good. But, O wonderful Love ! even now Thou givest when s ask not; Thou art with me, when I look not after Hernego:

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after thee; Thou imparted to me those inestimable Benefits which I have not a just regard for; nay, which I am so far from desiring, as even

to despise them.

Another Mercy of the first Quality I cannot but esteem the Providence of thine, which gives thy Angels Charge over me. That a Creature fo frail and fo expos'd should have a constant Guard of thy Appointment, and not be left to travel through this hazardous and troublefome Wilderness of a World like a Stranger in an enemy's Country, naked and alone; but have powerful Protectors and most affectionate Guides to keep him Company and be an unfeen Security to him. This, furely among other Confiderations, should abundantly convince us of the Dignity of our Souls; and how precious they are in thy Sight, that Thou art pleased to employ those bright and glorious Spirits in ministring continually Heb 1: 14. For them who fall be Heirs of everlasting Salvation. og to o f Hone I yns

But above all, I must needs admire that unwearied Patience and Pity, which no Provocations of mine could harden against me, so far as to withdraw the influences of that preserving Providence, though I have justly forfeited it long ago. And to this I am sensible it is, that I owe the being still in the land of the Livings and the having escaped the many dreadful Disasters, which stood ready to devour and destroy me. For what can I say, why the Earth should not long agor have opened her Mouth and swallowed me up; why I have not been ftruck through with hot Thunderbolts, blafted with Lightening, drowned in the Waters, or suffered some untimely or uncommon Death. which might evidently appear to carry the Marks of a fingular yengance, inflicted upon me for the Heinousness of my Sins? This there was Reafon enough to apprehend: For, when by finhing I depart from my God, I did henceforth not only deferve Thy Anger, and to be punished by thy Hand immediately; but I put myself into a state of Hostility, and armed the whole Creation against me. Thus we find it here below, that if any Great Man's Servant revolt from his Master, he does not exasperate his Lord alone, but the whole family refent the thing, and look upon themselves concerned to punnish the defection to the utmost of their power. And I, by parity of reason after incurring the Displeasure of Thee, my God, the Maker and Governor of all Things, ceased to deserve any Friendship or good Offices from any Branch of this thy numerous Family; and might expect that every Creature should rife up against me, and fight the Quarrel of their incensed Lord. Wisd 5. 17. The Earth might fay, I owe thee no Sustenance, and instead of nourishing, ought rather to swallow thee up; because thou haft deferted my Maker and thy King, and listed thyself in the Service of his Enemy, the Devil. The Sun might tell me, that he ought not to shed his Beams upon my Head, for the Com-forts

forts of Light and cherishing Warmth, but if at all to fcorch me up, or else to hide those Beams and withdraw them quite; that my Safety and Convenience ought now no longer to be hisCare, but only how to revenge the Dishonour done to that Lord, who is the Source of Light, and by whoseBrightness it is that he thines at all. Thus every Creature, in its Turn and respective Capacity, might threaten and upbraid my Rebellion against our common Maker and Governor. These, I am well affured, are Weapons, which God hath often made the Instrument of his angry Justice, against them who affront and live in Defiance of him and his Laws, But, in truth, there is no need of his iffuing out a fresh Commission, or fetting them on upon this Occasion; for, should God only withdraw that Restraint he keeps upon the Creatures, they would, when once left to themselves, soon make Examples of Sinners: And their not doing it every Day must wholly be imputed to that controuling Power, which checks and keeps them in; because he is long-suffering and tender, Ezek 18. not desiring the death of a sinner, but rather that be should be converted and live.

But sure when I sit down and compute my Obligations, the more and greater I find these to be, the more thankful, more entire, more ready and cheerful I ought to shew myself in my Obedience, for fear at last the Suspension of the Punishment add to the Weight of it; and Forest bearance

bearance abused inflame the Wrath of God, in proportion to the Time, and the Balenels, of my having it extended to me in vain. O let us then. my Soul, lay ferioufly to heart the wonderful Compassion of God, in not cutting us off in our Sins; let us admire that Grace by which he hath elected us. Pial 40. that we should be vellels of mercy prepared unto glory; let us adore that incomprehensible Love wherewith he hath loved us. For upon this Account did he wait patiently. incline his ear unto me and bear my call; turning his Eyes away from my Iniquities, as if he were loth to fee the Greatness of those Transgressions, which his Mercy disposed him not to punish. Therefore, I say, did he overlook, as it were, and made as though he did not fee, that he might commend the exceeding Greatness of his Patience, and give us the ample Testimony of his Love. To this end (for i perfectly remember, and feel the Imart still) did he pierce my Heart, rouzing it out of its lethargic Supidity, and making it fensible: how grievously it was wounded and bruised with Sin, that so it might understand its own Condition, and grone under the anguish of a broken Spirit. He led me down to the Gates of Hell, showed me the Flames and Fiends, the Torments and the Horror of that difmal Place prepared for the Damned. And when he had thus brought me to a Sight of my Milery and Danger: When my Heart was overwhelmed with Grief and Terror: and almost sunk in Deipair !

fpair; then did he turn again and revive me, let in fresh Comforts upon my Soul, inspire me first with Hopes of pardon for Sins, and then bestow that Pardon, which he hath sustained me with the Hopes of. and this Pardon is to frank, fo absolute, that all the Guilt and Resentment is wholly taken away by it. He will not now, I am fure, take his Revenge in my Condemnation: He will not expose me to Shame by upbraiding me with my Offences: He will not fuffer any unkind Remembrances of what a Wretch I have been heretofore, to lessen his love of me, as I am now. And these are all very engaging Considerations; for how many are there, who, though they pals over an Injury. so as at no other time to make the Offender smart for it, yet take the liberty of frequently casting it in his Teeth? Or if they smother their Resentments in Silence, yet bear a secret Grudge, and remember the Fault with Bitterness and Rancor? Either of which is very distant from a true and full Forgiveness. But nothing can be more unlike than thefe, to the Clemency and Benignity of the Divine Nathre. For God gives liberally, and forgives ablolutely; and, that repenting Sinners may want no Encouragement to trust in his Mercy and depend upon a favourable Reception. when they have recourse to him, the Greatness of the Guilt we are assured is no Bar to Pardon; Rom 6. 1. for where the Offence abounded, it is often manifest, that Grace is wont much more to abound. Of this

this the Scriptures furnish many eminent Testimonies for our Consolation. Matth: 26. Such was St. Peter; who, after having thrice solemnly and deliberately denied his Lord, John 21 had the Care of Christ's Sheep three several times committed to his Trust. Such was St. Paul, who from a Blaspemer of the Truth, and a Persecutor of the Church of God, Acts 9. 15. was made a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel. Such, once more, was St. Matthew, who, Matth 9° from sitting at the Receipt of Custom and the infamous Character of a Publican, was chosen to be an Apostle and had the Honour of being the first Writer of the New Testament,

CHAP. XIII,

The Power of Mastering Temptations.

Do all his former valuable Gifts God hath been Pleased to add that of Continence. By which I mean the Power of resisting and abstaining from. not only the Pleasures of Flesh and Sense, but all other Temptations and Vices whatsoever, to which it is no less criminal to yield, than it would be to those of Carnality and Luxury. And I must own with all due Gratitude, that in this respect have found myself so strengthned, as of late, by the Assistance of divine Grace to exercise that Mastery over my Appetite for a long

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long time together, which formerly I was not able to retain for three poor Days without fome fad Defect of Interruption. And this I count fo very happy an Alteration, as to challenge that Acknowledgment of Praise, Luke 1. He that is Mighty bath done for me great things. Some perhaps there are who have but a mean Esteem of this Bleffing; but to me it appears a very fignal one. For I am sensible what Enemies I have to encounter, and how very great a Proportion of Strength is necessary, for waging this spiritual War with any tolerable Success. The first Enemy which makes Gal 5. 17. head against this Virtue of ours, is our Flesh; and the Assaultings of it are those perpetual Lustings against the Spirit, which every Man hath fuch woful Experience of in his own Breaft. Now this is an Enemy, from whose Cruelty there is no running away: 'Tis a domestick Foe, an intestin War, and confequently a Combat of infinite Hazard and Danger. Thou canst not, O my Soul, disposses or drive him out of thy Quarters; the Condition of thy Nature hath tied him close to thee, and carry him about thou must, wheresoever thou goest. Now what can aggravate our Perils or our Mifery more than this, that we are under an Obligation and indispensible Necessity of sublifting the Forces that fight against us? Kill them we must not, and starve them out we cannot. Consider this; and then tell me, Micah 7. 5. how frict a Watch thou oughtest to keep over aSeducer that lieth in thy bosom. But

But neither is this the only Adversary we have to engage with; there is another which lays close siege, and compasseth us in on every Side; Imean the present evil World, which hath no less than than five Avenues always open to make his Approaches by; the five Senses of the Body through which he wounds me with his Darts, Jer 9. 21. and so Death comes up into my windows, and enters

into my palaces.

The Third is that common and inveterate Encmy of Mankind, that Old Serpent, which is more Subtle than all the Beafts of the Field. An Enemy that attacks us unfeen, and confequently more difficult to be avoided. Nor does he always proceed in the same Method ; but sometimes talls on with open Violence, fometimes trapans us by fecret Cunning, and fraudulent Infinuations: His Malice however, and his Cruelry, are always the same; and the End he drives at by the most different Means, is constantly our Mischief and eternal Ruin. And who now is sufficient to vanquish, shall I fay? nay, even to hold out, and keep himself from being vanquished by this triple Alliance and joint force? These things are what I thought fit to have the more express Notice taken of them, that Men may have the juster Notion of the Excellence, but withal the Difficulty too, of that mastery Virtue, which Imean here by Continence. That They who are happy in it might be duly sensible, how valuable a Gift they have received from God, and in that Sense might might excite their Hearts to a more earnest Love of their Preserver and great Benefactor, who alone could bestow it upon them. Psal 44. For it is through the Lord that we do all the Asts of this kind, and tread them under that rife up against us. He it is that subdues and crucifies our Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts: He, that protected us against this present evil World, and mortifies us to all its Vanities; and He it is, that breaks the Serpent's Head, and bruises Satan under our Feet, with all his wicked Wiles and Temptations. Is there not Reason then from the Contemplation of this Virtue, of the Conquests it makes, and the Power of making them, which is received from above, to cry out again and again, He that is mighty bath done for me great things, and holy is his name.

CHAP. XIV.

The Benefit of a Holy Hope.

BY being enabled to vanquish Temptations, I am put into a Condition of escapeing eternal Death: But it is yet a farther instance of Mercy, that the Lord my God afforded me such Grace, as may quallify me for inheriting the Blessings of eternal Life. And this I take chiefly to consist in Three Things: The Hatred of past Evil; The Contempt of present Good; and the Desire of that Good which is to come: Which Desire is

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also supported and inflamed by another precious Gift of God, the hope of obtaining that future Blessednets. Now there are likewise Three Confiderations, which uphold and ftrengthen my Heart in this Hope; and that so firmly, that no want of Defert on my part, not even the lowest. and most mortifying Thoughts of my Vileness and Unworthiness, nor the highest and most enlarged Notions of the Excellence of that Bliss in Heaven, can cast me down from this high Tower of Hope. No, my Soul is rooted and grounded in it, past the Power of being shaken with any melancholy Misgivings. And the Foundations that bear me up in all this firmness of Mind are Three: First, I consider the Greatness of God's Love expressed in my Adoption. Secondly. The Truth of God, which hath promised this Blessedness: and Thirdly the Power of God to make good whatever he hath promised to the uttermost. Let then my foolish desponding Heart raiseScruples to confound me, and object never so importunately; "Vain Man, confider what thou art, " and what thou fondly imaginest thou shalt one "day be; What can't thou fee in thy felf, a " Creature so little, so polluted, to think that e-" ver thou shouldst attain to a State of such Pu-" rity, fuch excellent Glory? Canst thou discern "any Proportion at all between a finite Creature " and infinite Happiness? Or art thou able to " discover any such extraordinary Merit to ground thy Hopes upon, as should incline God of to

" to exalt Thee fo much above what Nature " feems to have qualified thee for ? Thefe Difficulties I am in no degree terrified by, but can with great Affurance return this answer to them. and reit my Soul upon it; I know whom I have believed, and am verily persuaded 2. Tim. 1. 12. that God would never have adopted me for his own Child, had he not loved me exceedingly; that he would never have promised, had he not resolved to perform; and that, if these things could be supposed greater than really they are yet the putting me in actual Possession cannot Exceed his Power, because Iam sure he can do whatfoever pleaseth him both in Heaven and Earth : And therefore I can never love God enough, for inspiring and comforting me with this Hope, and putting me into the Way of attaining the Bliss he hath encouraged me to expect at his merciful Hands And great Encouragement I have from those Earnests and Antepasts of his future Goodness, which he vouchsates me even in this World. For such, I reckon, are His following after, and overtaking me, when I fled away from him; His controuling, and banishing my Fears by the Charms of Meekness and Kindness, cherishing and frequently reviving my Hopes, when I lay languishing in Despair; His even constraining me to better Obedience by heaping on fresh Benefits, notwithstanding my Ingratitude for those I had formerly received; His giving me a better Sense of things, and enabling me to relish the

the Sweetness of spiritual Joys, when my Palate stood to none but such as was impure and meerly fenfual: His burfting my Bonds afunder, and fetting me at Liberty from the Bondage of evil Habits, which I had not the Power to break; and his receiving me with fo much Tenderness, when by his help I had weaned my Affections from the World, and forfaken all to follow him. He would not have done thus much for me already, had he not intended to do more hereafter; and therefore I will trust his Word, for this Fulness of Bliss in Reversion and dare depend upon the full Accomplishment of it to his Servant, (though of myfelf most unworthy) finceI have suchGrounds of Affurance from the many precious Pledges of an inviolable Love exhibited and paid me down in hand.

CHAP. XV.

The many Instances of God's Bounty, notwithstanding our Sins; and the Thanks due to him upon this account.

Proceed then, my Soul, in these most pleasing Contemplations, and sustain thyself against all desponding Thoughts, by recollecting those many other Proofs of the divine Goodness, which have been so peculiar, so secretly conveyed to thee, that none but thyself could be privy to them. Think of those retired Pleasures, which thy

Lord entertains thee with in secret, upon thy Retreat from the World, and private Conversation with Him; What delicious Food he hath provided for the fatisfying of thy spiritual Hunger; What inestimable Treasures of Mercy he hath given thee richly to enjoy; What secret Longings he inspires thee with, and how plentitully thou hast been made to drink of the ravishing Cup of his Love. Was it then not a noble Condelcension, a most astonishing Instance of Compassion. that he left me not destitute of spiritual Comforts? Me, I fay. who was a flothful and ungracious Servant, a Fugitive, a Rebel, and one who never had returned to Him and my Duty. if he in mere, in boundless Pity, had not called me home? For thou canst not sure but remember. my Soul, that if at any time I was under sharp Trials, He interposed with seasonable Supports: If I was ready to be overpowered by Danger, he presently fortified me against them: if I was deiected with Grief, he sustained my Spirits : if I was wavering in my Duty, he strengthen'd and kept me steady : it I grew dry and heavy, fearful and faint, He poured in the Refreshments of his holy Spirit, and gave a greateful Relish to my Devotions. O I never can, I never ought to forget, when I have been reading, or hearing, or praying, or meditating, in private or in publick, how often he hath shone in upon me, and, by a Ray of heavenly Light, guided my Mind to a right understanding of his holy Word; opened mine

mine Eyes, that I might see the Meaning, the wondrous hidden things of his Law; collected my scattered Thoughts; put a stop to my Wandrings; and made them all to center in himfelf. with a Defire too intense to be expressed: How often he hath drawn off my Mind from earthly Objects, and raised it up to heavenly Delights, and fixed it there, and entertained me with those Pleasures, which are the Portion of the Blessed above. These and many more Expressions of his Mercy I have felt and rejoiced in; more than I can, more than perhaps, will become me to mention particularly, left I should seem to exceed the Bounds of Modelty, to infinuate an Opinion of fome more than common Worth in One so highly favoured, and arrogate to myfelf a part of that Glory, which is entirely His. For, according to the vulger Notions of these Matters, the Grace of the Giver, and the Privilege of the Receiver, are so closely connected, that he who ought alone to be praised is seldom praised alone; for the Perfon who is fo fignally happy in the Gift, is generally admitted into a Share of the Value and Commendation due to it. But, alas! what Share hath any of Us, even the best of us all, which he hath not received? And what Applause can belong to Him, who received all the Powers of doing well freely, as if this receiving were in any degree meritorious? To Thee, therefore, O Lord my God, to Thee alone, be the Praise, the Glory and Thanksgiving; but to me, I am sure, belongs

helongs nothing but Shame and Confusion of Face, for the numberless evil things I have done against thee, and the numberless good things I have been bless'd with from thee.

And indeed my Thanks are by no means what they ought to be, except these Articles be both taken in. For, though the Confideration of thy Goodness he by itself just matter of Gratitud and Wonder; yet it is still more engaging, more aftonishing, when that of our Offences and grievous Wickedness is added to it. For, if it be a Commendation of Bounty, to give largely where the Receivers have deserved nothing; how shall we find Ideas large enough to represent and worthily extol that Kindness, which returns Good for Evil. and bestows liberally where Men have been as liberal in their Injuries and Provocations? What strange Bowels of a fatherly Affection are those, which the most intolent, most perverse, most undutifulChildren cannot harden against them selves And yet, my Soul, this is directly the State of the Case between God and Thee. Many things there are, which he in Mercy forgives, many that he forgives most readily, and in great abundance. But then we must remember, that the Evils he forgives are entirely Ours, and the Good things he bestows are entirely his own. He is always ready to pardon, he is no less ready to give; the One proves his boundless Pity, the other his boundless Liberality; or rather indeed, both the one and the other prove that neither his Pity nor his

And what now, do you think, should be the the refult of these Considerations? What indeed but this, that every one who lays them feriously to heart, should take his mind off from all other Objects, and place his Love on God alone, who hath done so much for him? That he should find himself very tenderly affected, and wonderfully transported, with every Reflection upon such amazing Kindness and Compassion? If any Man can observe so much Mercy, so strong Obligations, and yet be wanting in Affection to God, let such a one be affured, that his Coldness proceeds from his Neglect and thoughtleffness. For every one, who will be at the pains to confider, will eafily find himself so highly indebted to God, that all he

he can do in this Service is little enough, and much less than is owing him in return, 'Tis true indeed all Men's Engagements in this point are not the same; nor hath God distributed his Bleffings with a perfectly even Hand: But they that have least, have more than they could lay claim to, more than they can ever be sufficiently grateful for. Admitting then, that a Man be not furnished even with all those Graces which are necessary to Salvation, yet will not this bear such a one out in murmuring against Providence, or charging God foolishly. For God is wise and just in all his Dispensations : He proceeds upon Measures, which, though unknown to us, are yet most reasonable in themselves: Rom. 9. 16. He bath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be bardeneth. And, being no Man's Debtor, but absolutely Master of his own Favours he may give where he sees fit, and resume what he had given, when and from whom he fees fit, without being accountable for either. Let Him therefore who hath not those gifts, lament his own misfortune with all humility, and labour after them, and pray for them most earnestly; and let Him, who hath them make a just estimate of the mighty bleffing, and give all diligence to be truly thankful to God for it.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Death of Christ.

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For my own part do most humbly confess. that the Benefits I have received from thee. my Lord and my God, are unmeasurably great, are innumerably many : So Many and fo Great. that I should be of all Creatures the most unworthy and infensible, should I not always love, and always praise thee for them. For whatever good thing, I am now, or ever was, or ever shall be possessed of, is from Thee, the SupremeGood, from whom all that is good proceeds. And yet there is one thing still behind, which, I must own inflames my Heart, and excites my Affection, more powerfully than all the reft, for never was any instance of thy kindness so engaging foirrefishible, as that most shameful and most bitter Death, which thou, Oblessed Jesus, dids submit to, for the accomplishing of the most glorious work of our Redemption. This fingly, or at least this with the reft, lays an indisputable Claim to all our Life, to all our Labours, to all our Obedience, to all our Love. This, I fav. is the confideration, which of all others excites our devotion most fervently, entertains it most agreeably, and raises it to the loftieft Pitch. Pfal 148. For in this great design the great Creator of the World takes pains, and feems to have retrieved the fabrick of his own framing, with much more difficulty than he at first built it all out of Nothing With what ease That was done, the Psalmist very lively expresses it; He spake the word, and they were made; be commended, and they were created: But

But for the Restitution of lost Men, good God! how many, how grievous, how long a Series of Labours and Sorrows didft thou undergo! Come hither then my Soul, and behold what manner of Love thy Saviour hath bestowed on thee; who, without any manner of Necessity to compel him. without any Profpect of Profit to induce him, but purely of his own free Mercy, was content to suffer such Hardship, such barbarous Indignities for thy fake ! Well might I fay, that this fingle Act of Goodness is an overbalance for all the rest. For though it be a great Kindness to lay out what we have for another's Advantage, yet what we have bears no proportion to what we are; nor ought that to be compared with the giving a Man's own felf. And, if the most exalted Friendship we ever heard of can go higher, than one friend's laying down his life for another; how much more noble was that Charity, of which the Son of God left us this unexampled Proof, of his laying down his Life for his Enemies. And that this was our Condition the Apostle declares, Rom 5. 10. 7. 8. When we were Enemies fays he, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and again, Scarcely for a righteous Man will one die, but God berein commended his love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: Peter 3. the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He removed down from the Mansions of Blis in Heaven, that he might carry us back thither with him. O unspeakable Love!

Love! O sweetness of Mercy unspeakable! O most amazing Consideration ! that God for the fake of Man should be made Man, that God for Man should die in the Flesh, Heb 4. 15, that he should submit to be tempted in all things like as we are, only without Sin. See at how an ineffimable a Price, see with what difficulty, Man was redeemed; who had forfeited and enflaved himfelf to the Devil; and, had he not been ranfomed at so vast an Expence, must unavoidably have suffered eternal Damnation, with the tyrannical Master of his own chusing. These reflections will shew thee, O Man, how much thou art bound to Love God; and if he calls thee to it, how patiently, how willingly, nay, with how chearful and eager a Zeal, thou oughtest to endure hardships, and pain, and tortures for Him who hath endured to much incomparably greater for Thee. For it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the Kingdom of God. And therefore let my Soul gladly embrace her Crucified Jesus; let her, my sweet Saviour, drink deep of thy delicious Blood; let this most moving Theme be her constant Meditation, that I may never one Moment be unmindful of him that died for me. 1 Chor 2. 2. I am determined from henceforth not to know any thing face Telus Christ, and him crucified; lest one vain mistaken Notion, should draw my Knowledge off from the firm Bottom of saving Faith; And, O! let this Love of thing take possession of all the Love

I am capable of, lest any rival Passion infinuate itself into my Heart, and I be swallowed up

with a torrent af worldly Affections.

In thus devoting my whole self to Thee, I shall consult not my Duty only, but my Happyness too. For those Hearts, which the sweetnes of thy Love hath taken full Possession of, are all Tranquility and Joy: there is no place for Fear to damp them, or Luft to defile them, or Anger to diffract them, or pride to swell them, or Vainglory to blow them about, or Ambition to gall them, or Covetoulness to narrow them, or Sorrow to deject them, or Envy to emaciate them; in thort, no diforderly Vice diffurbs their Peace, or corrupts their Joy, but they continue firm and calm like those upper Regions, where Clouds and Storms have no power. And what can we imagin will God give, or what will he not give hereafter, to those good Men who tafte so largely of his Bounty here? For even the best of those gifts' Men have in hand are Temporal; but those which he hath promised to bestow are Eternal, and consequently so much the more desirable, than any temporal Advantages, that even to make a Comparison between them were to injure and difparage them. For this is a Condition common to all temporal Advantages, that they are very hardly got, and very eafily loft again; that, while we have them in Possession, they are kept at the expence of a great deal of anxious Care, and parsed with to our great Grief, and if ever retriev'd again,

Trouble, But the Happiness of the next World is not capable of Loss, or Diminution; the Enjoyment of it is Pleasure without allay, and Ease without fraud or disturbance; the Desires of it are always keen, and the Delights of Possession always new. no Man receives them, but with full security, that they should no more be taken from him against his will, than he shall ever have the will to divest himself of them.

CHAP. XVII.

The Promises of God.

THIS may perfuade us to make the Promifes of God another Incentive to the Love of him. For, though the Benefits he hath given his Servants are great, yet those which he hath engaged to give them, are Incomparably greater. Now these are, Rest from our Labours; a Change from Bondage to Liberty, from Fear to Security, from Grief to Comfort; Resurrection to a Life Immorial after Death; and after that Refurrection, exquisite and endless Joy; In a word, he hath promised to give us Himself. So unspeakably glorious are his Promises; And the Love which these beget in us, he expects should exert itself after a very particular Manner: And that is, by a vehement Desire of the Promise, in which it is impossible to be guilty of Excess. In other Cases

we blame Men for being impatient, but this Case is an Exception to the rest, and here Men are to be commended for it. To be contented with delays, argues languid Desires and coldness of Assection; and as the wise Man observes very truly, Hope desered maketh the beart sick. Since then these Blisses are to be obtained no where but in our heavenly Country, it betrays too great an indifference, for such noble Reversions, when we do not long most earnestly to get at them, and are not weary and persectly sick of every thing that conspires to detain us from them.

CHAP, XVIII,

The Happiness of our Future State.

I ET us then raise our Thoughts as high, and stretch them as wide as ever we can, that we may try to represent to our selves in some measure the Nature and Persection of that Joy of the Saints, which no other is equal, no other like unto Now that chief Good, which we find called by the several Titles of Life, Light, Blessedness, Wisdom, Eternity, and the like, is but One most simple and supreme Good, persect and self-sufficient, without which no other thing can either be persect, or indeed be at all: This Good, I say, is God the Father, This the Word, or Son of God, This again is that pure undivided Love common to Father and Son both, The Holy Ghost,

Ghoft, I mean, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Now such as each of these Persons is, considered apart by himself, such is the whole Trinity taken together; Father, and Son, and Holy Ghoft: For each of thefe fingly is nothing else but the One most simple, constant Being. which can neither be mulciplied, nor diversified, nor changed. Here then is that One thing, which is necessary: For that must certainly be a necesfary Good, in which all Good is; nay, which itfelf is Good the One whole and fole Good. If each of these Things, which we call Good, minister so much Delight, how much must flow from the Possession of Him who comprehends them all, and is as much superior to Them in Excellence, as the Creator is above the Creature? Let us not then lavish away our Time and Pains upon Things that only flatter us with deceitful Promises of Happiness: but let us love this One Good for that alone can suffice for all our Exigences, and fill all our largest Desires. It is but loft Labour to attempt a just Description of the Blifs referved for us in our heavenly Father's Kingdom; no Words can express, no Mind confined in Flesh can expand itself sufficiently to conceive them. For when we have let loofe our Thoughts, still those Joys are of a Compas larger than they can fetch. Many and glorious Things indeed have been spoken of this City of God, but yet the half of the Truth hath not been told us. This is the only Instance, in which Report can never exceed,

and Praise can never flatter; no Knowledge can ever come up to it, no Glory compare with it. The Kingdom of God, in a word, is full of Light and Peace, Charity and Meekness, Honour and Glory, Sweetness and Love, Joy and everlasting Blis: To be short, of every thing that is Good, more and better than can be possibly exprest or conceived: But still this is no Argument, why I should not speak of it at all, or represent its Excellencies, as well as I can, because I cannot do it so well as I would. We believe the Majesty of God to be unspeakably Glorious; but no Man is so extravagently fure, to infer from thence, that we ought never to speak of him; nay, it follows rather, that we should speak the most glorious Things we are able, that they who hear us, may believe him to be still far above what we can fay of him. Much more, 'tis evident, may be comprehended by the Understanding, than aMan can find proper Words to utter; and yet the most profound and capacious Mind cannot comprehend. or have any Ideas of, the Kingdom of Heaven in any degree suitable to its real Excellence. And therefore the Life to come is what we have represented to us by this following Character, That it is Eternal in Duration, & a Blessedness to all E. ternity, a State where there is the most profound Security and Tranquility, Pleasure without Passion, Love without Fear, Love in Perfection, Day without Night, Activity and Strength without possibility of Decay, perfect Unanimity, all the Souls

Souls in it, rapt with the Contemplation of God, and past all apprehension of being ever deprived of his beatifick Presence: a City blessed with the most glorious Inhabitants, where all the Saints and Angels take up their perpetual Residence; the Splendor whereof consists in the shining Graces of God's Elect; where Health abounds, and Truth reigns for ever! where there is no deceiving, nor being decived; out of which none of the Happy are ever expelled, into which none of the Wretched are ever admitted.

This is that happy contemplative Life, which they who reach up to, by the finishing of their Virtues, shall for ever enjoy, and be like the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and shall reign with them for ever. What fuch have here anticipated by faith, they shall there have in Sight; beholding with pure Hearts the Substance of their Creator; rejoicing with never-ceafing and exceeding great Joy, united unspeakably to God, and to each other, by the full Fruition of the Divine Goodness, and the Charmes of mutual Love; Then shall their own scatter'd Bodies be restored, and put on Immortality and Incorruption; and thus united they shall be made true Subjects of their heavenly Country, and invested with all the Priviledges of the City of God. Then shall they reap the Fruits of all their holy Labours, those eternal Recompences, the Promises and distant Expectation whereof sustained their Spirits in the many long and painful Conflicts here below. A general Gladness there

there shall overflow, and these Joys shall be so agreeable, that they shall always be thankful to their bountiful Rewarder for the Plenty he hath so nobly enriched them with, and yet the Plenty shall abate no Man's Satisfaction in the Abundance he enjoys. There every Man's Heart shall be open to every Man, for every Breaft shall be fo white and pure, that the Souls fo cleanfed shall find cause to thank God for washing away their Stains in the Blood of his Son, but not at all to be ashamed or blush for any of their old Blemishes: And why fhould they not fee one anothers Hearts freely, who have no Secrets in referve, no separate Interest to promote, no Deceit to manage, no Faults to conceal? For neither Sins nor Sinners are in Heaven, and They who once were fuch, from the inftant of their entring that place of Purity, are out of all poffibility ever to be fo any more. None of the darkest Secrets, none of the deepest Mysteries shall then continue such: The Bleffed shall be let into a distinct knowledge of them all; and which is infinitely better, they shall be ever viewing and admiring the adorable Perfections of God himfelf.

This human Nature shall then be advanced to its just and utmost Perfection, incapable of being exalted, or sunk lower any more. All the Excellencies communicated to it by being made after the likeness of its Maker, shall then be set at their highest Pitch; and the Corruption and Desects introduced by Sin utterly done away. Nay, we

shall even rise above what was given us at our first Creation, though we had been so happy as to retain our primitive advantages. We shall understand and judge without Error, remember without forgetfulness, think without wandring, love without Dislimulation; we shall have Sense without any thing to offend it, Ease without Pain. Life without Death; Power of acting without Obstruction, fulness without nauseating, and such a Perfection of every of our Faculties, that there shall be in us all imaginable soundness and Vigor, without any fort of Disease or Decay. Whatever maim our Bodies may have suffered here, by fudden Difasters, or wasting Distempers, or mortified Sores, whatever Limbs have been loft by the Bitings of wild Beafts, or the Cruelty of Men no less barbarous than they, no War, or Fire, or any other dismembring Accident; nay, even the Weakness and Deformities of Sickness and old Age, shall all be repaired at the General Resurrection; and the Body compleat in all its Parts; Sound and Youthful. Beautiful and Gay, shall then, together with the Soul, be cloathed with everlasting Health and Immortality. So happy shall all the Saints be at that Day; but though all shall be happy, yet will not they all be equally fo, their Bliffes then will hold Proportion to their Virtues now; I Cor 15. and one flar differs from another in that glory, Pfal 62. 12. becaute the merciful King of Glory rewards every man according to bis work. SELECT

SELECT

MEDITATIONS

OUT OF

St. Augustine's Private Contemplations.

BOOK III,

CHAP. I,

Lord, that ferchest me out, and knowest me, help me likewise to know Thee, thou Life of my Soul. Shew me thy Face, my Light, my Comfort, thou Joy and Desire of my Heart. Let me find, let me embrace, let me possess thee, my heavenly Spouse, my everlasting Bliss. Let me love thee O Lord Psal 118. 1. my Strength, my Tower of Salvation, my Hope and Help, and sure Resuge in all manner of Distress: Let me enjoy thee, my chief Good, without whom nothing is good.

John 1. 1. O Word of God Eternal, Heb 4.
12. Sharper than any two edged Sword, open mine
Ears, that I may hear thy Voice. O Light incomprehensible, enlighten mine Eyes, that they may
behold thee; and scatter, Lord all those Mists
of Vanity that dance before my Sight, and lead

me into Sin and Error. Cant 1. Make me a new Smell, that I may run after the odour of thy ointments; and correct my viciated Palare, that I may taft and delight in thy gracious Goodness. Píal 34. 8. And having thus reformed my Senfitive, carry on, I beseech thee, the good Work in the Intellectual Faculties of my Soul: Oh, that my Understanding may apprehend thee my Will chuse thee, my Memory retain and meditateupon thee, and my whole Heart cleave to thee with immovable Stedfastness, and a most sensible Delight. O Life to and by whom all things live; without whom I die and perish, by whom I am animated, fustained, restored, exhilerated; where shall I find thee, that I may go out of myself, and fublist entirely in Thee ? Exed 33. 20. Thou haft faid indeed, No Man fall fee me, and live, Lo! if this be the Condition of my Happiness, I most gladly accept it; yea, let me die, O Lord, that I may fee thee in Heaven; and let me fee thee, that I may die to this World. Phil 1. 23. Acts 7. 59. I defire to be disfolved and to be with Christ, which is far better : I wish to die that I may fee my Lord: I would not live here, that I may live with Christ. Lord Jesus receive my Spirit: Take thou my Soul, my Lite; enter into my Heart, thou Joy of my Heart; that it may rejoice in Thee. Shed thy bright Beams upon it, Sun of Righteousness, that it may know and love thee: For therefore does it not love Thee as it ought, because it knows Thee but ve-LA

ry imperfectly; and therefore is its Knowledge very imperfect, John 1. 3. because thy Light hath hitherto shined in darkness, and my darkness

did not receive it, as it ought.

O Light of Truth, and true Light, John 4. 4. which lightest every man that cometh into the world (that cometh into it, but not that loveth it; for who soever will be a Friend of the world is an Enemy of God) dispel the thick Darkness which is upon the Face of this Chaos; that my Mind may fee thee by its intelectual Powers, and fo comprehend, as to know thee; and fo know as to love thee, even more than himself: forsakes himself and flies to Thee, that there he might find Peace and Joy. For the want of that Knowledge it is that I have been so extremely defective in this Point ; departing from Thee, the true inward and spiritual Joy, and seeking Satisfaction in outward Objects. Thus have I with an adulterous Affection, set that unfaithful Heart upon Vanities, which of right was entirely thine. And I have succeeded according to my Folly: For as Vanity was the Object, so hath it been the Fruit and Portion, of my Love. This made it impossible for me to delight in, and to rest upon Thee. For I was conversant about Externals, whereas Thou art to be found only in Internal Pleasures; I made Temporal Advantages my Study. Thou imparts est thyself in those that are Spiritual. My Thoughts and Discourfe, and Inclinations, were engaged and entangled in short and transitory Things: And thou.

thou, Isaiah 57. 15. O Lord, inhabitest in, nay, art thyself, Eternity. Thou art in Heaven, I altogether on Earth: Thou lovest high Things, I foolishly dote on such as are vile and low. And what Way can be found to reconcile such contrary Dispositions.

CHAP. II.

THen, wretched Man, when shall this Crooked in thee be made Strait, and modell'd by the Rule and Pattern of thy God? He delights in Solitude and retired Contemplation, I pursue Variety of Company and Divertions: He loves Truth I follow Lies and Deceit: He requires, and is himself unspotted Purity; I wallow in Uncleanness, and all manner of filthy Lufts. Thus, Lord, Thou art Good, and I Evil Thou Holy, I a miserable Sinner: Thou art Light, I Blindness; ThouLife, I am Dead; Thou effential Truth, Pfal 30. 6. I altogether Vanity, Such alas! am I, and such is every man living. And now, what shall I say to thee, my God? I am thy Creature, and am reduced to nothing: 119.73. Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me; nay, thy Hands were nailed to the Cross for me; 138. 8. do not, my Creator, despise the works of thy own hands; do not, my Redeemer, forget the Wounds of thy own Hands. Isa 49. 16. Behold thou hast graven me upon the Palms of thy Hands; O read those indelible indelible Characters, and save me- To Thee thy Creature lifts up his Soul, make me again by thy regenerating Power; inspire me with new Life by thy enlivening Influence; heal my Breaches, repair my Decays, and spare me by thy Mercy, for my Days Psal. 39. 6 are even as nothing in

comparison of Thee.

Lord, what is Man, that he should presume to Gen. 18. 27. expostulate with, or address to God his Maker ? Pardon thy Servant, Lord, who is but Dust and Ashes, and yet takes upon him to speak to so great a Majesty: Let my Necessity be accepted as an Excuse for this Boldness. My Grief will have Vent, and my Calamity forces a Complaint. I am Sick, and cry to my Physician for Help; Blind, and feek to the Light; Dead, and implore the life of Souls. For this Physician. Light and Life art Thou, and only thou, ; Luke, 18. 37. 38. 39. and therefore Jesus of Nazareth have mercy on me, Son of David have mercy on me, O Fountain of Health, harken to the Complaints of thy poor diseased Patient. O Light, which passed by, stand still a while, till this blind Creature can come to thee: Pfal 36. 3. Lend him thy Hand, and in thy Light let bim fee light. O Life effential and everlasting, raise from the Grave of Destruction this Wretch, long Dead in Trespasses and Sins. Lord, what am I, who have thus taken upon me to talk to thee? A stinking Carcais Food for Worms, a polluted broken Vessel, Fewel for the Fires of Hell. O wretched Creature ! Dd

Creature! Mercy, my God, Mercy! Job 14. 1, for all this and no better is man born of a woman, who bath but a short time to live, and is full of misery: Psal 39. 6. 49. 20. Man who is altogether vanity, compared to the beasts that perish, and

resemble them in folly.

But what, alas ! am I, the worst of Men? A dark Abyss, a Clod of Earth, Ephes 2. 3. 2 Tim 2. 20. a Child of Wrath. a Veffel of Dishonour, conceiv'd in uncleanness, living in Trouble, dying in Anguish: Poor and naked, miserable and weak not knowing whence I came and whither I goe; Pfal 102. 11, whose days pass like a shadow, whose life withereth like grafs. The more is added to it the more is taken from it; and every step from my Cradle is a nearer Advance to my Grave. Who for a while am exercis'd with the Viciffitudes of Joy and Grief, of Health and Sickness; with Fear and Trembling, Hunger and Thirst, Heat and Cold Languishing and Pains; and at last must sink down and vanish in Death, which hath a thousand Ways of snatching Mortals out of the World, when they are least aware of it; most certain in itself, but in the Time and Manner most uncertain,

This, Lord's my Misery, and yet I am secure in the midst of these Dangers. So great is my calamity, so little is my sense of it. Psal 39. 15. I will therefore cry to my God before I go away bence, and be no more seen. I will confess my Vileness before thee, and shew thee all my Trouble. Shine

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Shine upon me, my Light; by whom I see: Come unto me, and puicken me my Life, by whom alone I live. For thou alone art my Help and Light; my Life and Joy, my Lord and my God.

CHAP. III.

The Misery of Unregenerate Man.

John 1. 1, 2. John 14. 6. O Lord, the Word of God, the Word itself God; Thou art Light, and by thee the Light was made : Thou art the Way, the Truth. and the Life, in whom is no Darkness or Error, no Vanity or Death. Ifa 5. 20. Without thee I put darkness for Light and Light for darkness Without thee I am, all over Confusion and Mistake, Ignorance and Blindness: Gen 1. 3. Say to my Soul, Let there be Light, that I may difcern the Light, and avoid Darkness; that I may fee the Way, and be delivered from my Wandrings; rhat I may know the Truth, and not be deceived by Falshood; that I may attain the true Life, and not be swallowed up in Death. Thou art my Lord, and I will fear thee; my God, and I will praise thee; my Father, and I will love thee; my Spouse and I will keep myself only unto thee. Pity this desolate Creature, Luke 1. 78 79. Plal 42. 4. whichfits in darkness, and in the shdow of death, and guide my feet in the way of peace, that I may go into the house of my God, with

joy and thank/giving. For this is the Way by which I must turn from my Errors, unto Thee

the true Way, even the Way of Life.

I will therefore approach thee, O Father of Heaven and Earth, and lay before thee all my State, that the frank Confession of my Misery may recommend me to thy Mercy. I was reduced to nothing, nay, worse than nothing, and knew it not, because thou art the Truth, and I was not with thee: I was wounded with my Transgreffions, and felt no Smart, because thou art the Life, and I was not with thee. I was brought to nothing, because thou art the Word, by whom all things were made and I was not with thee. Gen 1. 13. For God fare all things that he had made, and behold they were very good. They must be so, John 1 3. because nothing was made without him; and nothing that is good can be otherwise so, but by its Participation of, and Union with the Supreme Good: But God made not Evil, nor hath it any Being of its own, but is only a Privation of Good, and is therefore Nothing, and makes the Committers of it in God's Account nothing too, as being made without the Word, without which nothing that hath an actual Existance was made; and therefore it is Evil, because it Proceeds not from, and hath no Part in, that Good, by which all things were made. And consequently to be without the Word, is to be nothing; and Evil argues a Defect only, and not a politive Effect, because all things that are, are by the Word. Now

Now what it is to be without the Word is easy to be understood from that Discription given of himself, John 14, 6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life : He that is without these, is without the Word; and to be without him is Evil. because it separates from the Author of all Good: it is also to be Nothing, because it infers a Defect. a Privation of living in and with him, by whom all things that exist are, and are made good. So often then as we depart from Good, so often we depart from the Word, and from our proper Existence. And I thank thee, O Lord, for so far enlightening me with the Knowledg of Thee, and of myself, as to make me sensible, that when soever I forget that which is Good, and corrupt myfelf with Evil, I am transformed from what Iwas. lose my spiritual Life and Being, and am cut off from Thee. Wretch that I was, not to confider this before! How low I fell, and how exactly that Discription of the Heathen Idols suited the Condition of my Soul: For this too, during my Separation from Thee, Pfal 15. 5, 6, 7. bath ears, and bears not, noje and smells not; eyes and fees not; mouth, and speaks not; bands, and acts not. In short, is nothing but an empty Form, the Lines and Proportions of every Part, without the Use and Sensation proper to any of them.

So true it is, that while I was without thee, I was not at all, but fell back into nothing; Blind and Deaf, and infenfible to do Good, having no Inclination, no Knowledge to avoid Evil. Hence had

had my Enemies their Will upon me; they ftrip. ped and wounded, they spoiled and slew me, because I departed from Thee, my Light and my Defence. But, O God of my Life, raise me, I pray thee, from this Death. Look upon me in the Day of my Trouble, and fave me from the Hand of the infulting Adversaries. Let them that hate me flee before thee, and let me live in thee, and by thee. They faw my Mifery, and had me in Derision; they divided my Virtues, those Garments given to adorn my Soul, among them, and rode over my Head! They defiled thy holy Temple with Sin, and brought me into Ruin and Desolation: They led me Captive from one Wickedness into another, and dragg'd me thro' Mire and Clay. I was a Slave and in love with my Bondage; blind, and loved darkness rather than light; tied and bound, and fond of my Chains. Miserable and knew it not, And all, because separated from the Almighty Word, by which every Creature subfists, and is preserved. O do thou from henceforth unite me to thyself; for when I go from thee, I perish; and can no Way be restored to Being, but by that Power making me a new Creature, which at first did make me out of nothing. And bleffed be that Power and Mercy, which vifited me when I offended, rais'd me up when I was fallen, taught me when I was ignorant, and gave Sight to my Eyes when I was blind.

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An Act of Praise for God's manifold Mercies in Man's present State.

TEACH me, my God, how much I ought to love thee, how thankfully I ought to praise thee, how carefully I ought to please thee. Let the Voice of thy Thunder be heard from above, and pierce the Ears of my stupid Heart; that I may magnify that Goodness, which created me when as yet I was not; which enlighten'd me, when I was Darkness; which revived me; when I was Dead; which sustained me from my Youth up with its Bounty; and still cherishes this vile, useless loathsume Worm with the good Gists of its right and left Hand.

Rom 3. 7. Open to me, O Key of David, which openest, and no man shutteth, and no man openesth to him a gainst whom thou shuttess; Open to me, Holy and True, that I may enter into thy Light, and see, and know, and thank thee with my whole Heart. Psal 86. 13. For great is thy mercy towards me, and thou hast delivered my Soul from the nethermost hell. Psal 8. 1, 4. O Lord my God, how excellent is thy Name in all the world! What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? O Hope of thy Saints, and Life of my Soul, by whom I live, and without whom I die; Light of my Eyes, and Joy of my Heart, let me love thee

thee with all my Mind, and with all my Strength, because thy Bowels are so wonderfully enlarged, and thou hast first loved me with an exceeding Love.

And whence is this to me, Pfal 16. 2. that the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and of the great Deep, to whom my Goods cannot extend. cannot add any thing, should vouchfafe to love a Creature of whom he hath no need? O Wisdom. O Word of God, which enablest the Dumb to fpeak, open my Mouth, and inspire me with thy Praise, that I may thankfully recount the Benefits which thou hast from the Beginning conferred upon thy Servant: My very Being is from thy Gift: I am, because thou madest me; and this was ordained by thee from all Eternity; ere the Mountains were brought fourth, or the great Deeps broken up; before the Earth was fixed upon its Foundations, or the Heavens stretched out as a Curtain; I was written in thy Book, and numbred among thy Creatures, by an everlafting Decree: a certain forefight of every thing that should be, long before it was.

And what O most merciful Father: and most mighty Creator, What could there be in me to deserve, what to incline, thy glorious Majesty to make me? What indeed, since I was not? And thou madest me not a Drop of Water, a Sparke of Fire; not a Bird or a Fish, not aBrute or an insect, not aStone or a Tree, not one of those Creatures to whom thou hast imparted Being

Being without Life; nor of those who have Life withoutSense; nor of those, who haveSense without Reason: But a Creature superior to all those; Psal 8. 5. a little lower than the Angels, because Partaker of an intelligent Spirit, common to Man with them, by thy merciful Distribution and most wise Appointment. But still a little lower than the Angels, because they are happy in that Knowledge of thy Glories, which they attain by Sight, but I by Faith and Hope only: I Cor 13. 9. 10, 12. They see thee face to face I darkly through a glass: They know thee fully, I as yet but in part.

CHAP. V.

The Excellency of Man's future State.

Condition will not last always: 1 Cor 13. 10. For when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; 1 Cor 3. 18. then shall we with open face behold the glory of the Lord, and be changed ourselves into the same image of him we behold. What shall then hinder us from being no longer a little lower than the Angels, whom thou hast already crown'd with Hope, Psal 8. 5. and shalt then crown with glory and honour, whom thou delightest to honour as thy Friends and Favourites, and advance to a Dignity and Happiness in all Points

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Points like theirs? Thus hath thy Truth declared, Luke 20. 34. 36. that They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, are equal to the Angels, and are the Children of God. Children of God in the most beneficial and exalted Sense, if epual to the Angels? and therefore Sons of God, because the Son of God was made the Son of Man. The Consideration of this Mystery gives me the Consideration of this Mystery gives me the Consideration to the Angels; not only that Man is little lower than the Angels; not only that he is equal to the Angels, but that in some respects he is even superior to the Angels, in that Man, not Angel, is God; and God vouchsafed to be made not

Angel, but Man.

This Honour done to our Nature gives Man a Prerogative above any other Creature whatfoever : John 1. 1, 2, 3. For the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God; that Word which taid, Gen 1. 3. Let there be Light, and there was Light; (by which created Light some understand those Intelectual Spirits the Angels) John 1. 14. that Word, by which God made all things, in the Beginning, was made flesh and dwelt in us, and we have feen his Glory. This is that Glory in which I Glory: The joy in which I rejoice. I acknowledge therefore, O Lord, my Life, my Joy and Glory, that in making me a Creature capable of Reason, thou hast made me in some regardequal to the Angle; because this gives me a Capacity of being made perfect by thy Word, and receving the Adoption of Sons by

by thy only begotten Son Matt 3. 17. that beloved Son in whom thou art well pleased; thy consubstantial coeternal Heir, Jesus Christ our onsubstantial coeternal Heir, Jesus Chris

I will magnify thy Name, O Lord, for that by creating me in thy own Image after thy own Likeness, thou hast given me a Capacity of such excellent Glory, as to become a Child of God. This is an Honour, which Trees and Stones, and all the vegitable and sensitive World, whether of Creatures in the Air, or Earth, or Sea, are totally excluded. To whom thou haft not granted the the Power of becoming thy Children, because they are not endued with Reason. For in that Reason, by which we attain to the Knowledge of God, does this Capacity confift; and therefore Man alone is happy in it, because resembling his heavenly Father in the Dignity and Perfection of a rational Soul. Thus to thy Favour and Goodness I owe my being a Man, and to a yet higher Degree of the same Goodness, that, being Man by Nature, I am quallified for becoming thy Child by Grace, which no other of the Creatures in this lower World can be. And

And whence is this to me, thou Universal Author and Maker of every Creature; whence, that I should be so signally honoured above the rest of the Works of thy Hands? Thou art the same from and to all Eternity, and didft in time create all things in the space of fix Days. Man and Beafts, Stones and Trees were produced together. No antecedent Merits of their own contributed to that Production: For how could they deferve, who as yet were not? It was of thy Goodness alone, that they had a Being communicated to them, and all in this respect was equal, that all were alike undeferving. How came it then to pass, that this Creature whom thou enduedst with Reason, should receive such a peculiar, such abundant Marks of thy Love? Why were not They advanced to the same Level with me, or I at least thrust down to the same with Them? Had I any Right, any Pretence at all, to that glorious Priviledge of being made capable of this Divine Sonship? Far be it from me, Lord, to entertain so vain a thought. No, no; it was thy Goodness, thy free Grace alone, that made this Distinction so much to my Advantage; that I might fee, and feel, and tast, and partake largely of thy Mercy. And therefore, by that Grace, which thus appeared fo liberally in my first Creation, I humbly implore thee to make me a new. Creature; and grant me Grace to be duly thankful for thy infinite Goodness thus extended to me. CHAP.

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Of the Almighty Power of God.

all Occasions the same, created Angels in Heaven, and Worms upon Earth; nor was the one of these Opperations less a Demonstration of thy Omnipotence than the other. For as no Hand but thine could give Being to Creatures so noble as the Angels, so none but thine could frame the vilest Insect. Thine only could spread out the Firmament, thine only could produce the least Spire of Grass. Thine only could fashion these wonderful Bodies of ours, thine only could make the least Hair of our Heads white or black; for to that Power which knows no Bounds, all things are not only possible, but all are equally so.

Matth, 6. 36. To Thee there is the same Difficulty in making a Worm, as an Angel; to Thee the same Ease in creating the whole Heaven, as a single Lease; the colouring a hair, and compacting a Body, are the same thing; and the Almigty sinds no Difference between hanging the Earth upon the Waters, and Psal-135.6. supporting the Waters by dry Ground. Whatever pleased him was done in beaven and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places, and done exactly as it pleased him. He made them all, and me among the rest, according to the Excellency of

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his Wisdom and Skill, and Power and good Pleasure. Thy Hand, hadst thou thought fit, could have made me a Stone, or a Bird, or a Serpent. or any of the brutal Kind; but such was thy Goodness, that it would not. If then I would be satisfied why Iam none of these, but a Creature by far more excellent than all these; no other Answer can be returned to that Question but this, That thy wondrous Goodness was pleased thus to order it, and that it did thus order it without any Consideration on my part, to deserve, or any way incline thee to grant me such Preserve above the Creatures of lower Attainments, and less honourable Station.

How shall I therefore praise thee, most mighty Lord? how shall I be able to contribute to thy Glory, who could contribute nothing to my own Existence? Let thy own Works magnify thee, according to the Greatness and Multitude of thy Power and Mercies. Thy Praise is too vast to be comprehended by Thoughts, express'd by Words, or heard by any mortal Ear. These all are finite and pass away, but thy Glory is infinite, and the Praise of it endureth for ever. Our Thoughts begin, and soon come to an End, our Words form different Sounds, and vanish into Air; our Ear receives Impression of those Sounds, and quickly loses them again; but thy Praise is fixed, and abideth to all Eternity.

Psal 106. 2. What mortal Man then is sulficient to tell thy noble acts, or set forth all thy praise? ir

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es himself unable to praise thee. We only praise in and by thyself, and all our Praise is in thee. Then have we true Praise, when thou approvest thy own Works in us: When we seek it from any other, we lose true Praise; for this is transitory, thine eternal; and as oft as the transitory is grasped at, the eternal slips away from us. Let me therefore love and seek thee alone, from whom is true and lasting Praise. Give me thyself, and so shall I be able to praise thee; for, what am I without thee but Dust and Ashes, a dead Dog, a loath-some Carcas; Num 16. 22. Is 57. 15. and how shall Death and Corruption praise the God of the Spirits of all steff, that inhabiteth Eternity.

Can Darkness praise Light, and Death Life? Yet fuch is the Difference between Thee and me. Thou art Light, I am Darkness: Thou art Life I am Death: Thou an eternal Substance, I Vanity and Nothing. And can a mortal Man, who to-day is, and to-morrow is not, praise him that endures the same for ever? Can Rottenness and Worms add to the Glory of the Great God? Can He that is conceived and born, and brought up in Sin, praise that Holiness, whose pure Eyes cannot behold Iniquity? No, my God; let thy own incomprehensible Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, thy boundless Mercy and unspeakable Clemency; let these, for these alone are qualified to fet forth thy Praise. Even that Almighty Power, and infinite Love, by which thou haft created

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me to a Natural, and regenerated me to Spiritual Life, O God. the Life of my Soul.

CHAP, VII.

A Prayer for the Divine Grace and Protection.

Will therefore rejoice under the Shadow of thy wings, and hope in thy Goodness, which first gave me Being. Thy Bounty made me, let it also help me : Preserve that Creature which thy Goodness made, from perishing in its own Wickedness and Misery. For how am I the better for being made, if I be fuffered to fink into my own Corruption? Pfal. 89. 47, 138, 8, Haft thou, my God, created man for nought ? Despile not then the work of thy own bands ; but govern and preserve it, Thou madest me out of nothing; and if thou leavest me destitute of thy Protection, I shall quickly return into nothing, for as Iwas not, when thou commandedft me into Being; fo unless thou be pleased to assist and support me, there is that Principle of Destruction in me, which will foon make me not to be again.

Help me therefore thou God of my Life, that I perish not Hadst Thou not made me, I had never been at all. Because thou madest me, I am what I am; but if thou preservest me not I am no more: Let then that Love, which prevail'd with thee to give me Being, prevail also for the Governance and Presurvation of that Being: Save

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what thou hast created, and compleat thy Mercy; for better were it never to have created me, than to create me for Sin and Destruction. The Benefit I ask is not less than that vouchsated already? Thy Love is still the same, for thou hatest nothing that thou hast made, and art the same kind God, even Love itself. Is 59. 1, 3. Thy band is not shortned that it cannot save, neither thy Ear beavy, that it cannot hear; but my iniquities have separated between me and my God, between Darkness and Light, between the shadow of Death and Life, between Falshood and Truth; between my perishing and thy enduring and everlasting Substance.

CHAP. VIII.

A Prayer against Evil Defires.

THESE are the thick Shades of Night, with which I am encompass'd in the dark Dungeon of this mortal Body, Pet 1. 19. till the day dawn, and the day star arise in my heart. O that thy powerful Voice would issue that irresistable Command, Gen 1. 2, 3. Let there be light! so shall Darkness disperse from off the face of the deep, so the dry land appear, and bring forth abundantly the green Herb, and the Fruit of Righteousness after his kind. O Father of Life, leave me not under the Power of wicked Imaginations, nor give me a proud Look; Ecclus 23.

4, 5, but turn away from thy Servant an haughty Mind, and vain Concupiscence, and possess my Heart with thy Grace that I may serve and always think on Thee with reverence and God-

ly Fear.

Enlighten my Eyes that they may see thee, and not exalt themselves; but gaze with humble wonder on the things that are too high to be theroughly perceived: And fix my Sight and Defires on the bleflings of thy right, and not on those of thy left Hand. Attract my Heart with that Goodness which thou laid'st up for them that fear thee, that I may Love thee with everlasting Love; and not wander after vain Objects, and, blinded with their deceitful Appearence, Isai 5. 20. put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; darkness for for light, and light for darkness: But that by thy gracious guidance and mighty protection, I may be safely led, and escape those manifold Snares which the subtil Nature of our common Enemy lays every where in our way to catch unwary Souls. Of which, he, who wifely had confidered our Danger, hath given us this fair Warning, I John 2. 19. All that is in the world, is the luft of the flesh, the desire of the Eyes, and the pride of life.

Since then every place is so thick with Snares, and every step we take so full of Hazards, who shall be able to promise himself Safety? Surely none but He, whom thou securest from the desire of the eyes, by taking from him a proud look;

none but He, whom thou defendest against the lust of the flesh by turning from him vain concupiscence: None but He, whom thou hast made proof against the pride of life, by delivering him from a haughty and infolent, and profane mind. Happy the Man who is thus arm'd, thus protected; Psal 89. 22. His enemies shall not be able to do him violence, the fon of wickedness (ball not burt

I beg thee therefore, O my redeemer, for thy own Mercies fake, let me not fall into the Snares laid for me, nor give the adversary occasion to triumph in my Ruin. Pfal 68. 1, 2. Let my God arise, and let bis enemies be scattered, yea let them which hate him flee before him. Like as the smoak vanisheth, so do thou drive them away; and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God. Thou, Lord, art the Father of the Fatherless, hear the cry of thy desolate and helples Children. Psal 121. 4. Sleep not nor flumber, O thou keeper of Ifrael, for the watchful Enemy that labours Ifrael's Destruction, doth neither Slumber nor Sleep.

O Light, before which all other Light is Darknels, which no Night can Damp, no obstruction intercept, no Blindness shut out; Thou that enlightenest every Thing in every Part, at once and always receive me into thy Brightness, that I may fee thee in thy felf, and my felf in thee, and all things else under thee. It thou withdraw thy shining, the clouds of my Ignorance gather, and I

am overwhelmed with Sin and Error. All is black all evil without thee, for what can possibly be good, which is destitute of Thee, the True, the

Chief, the Only Good.

I know, OLord, and acknowledge, that befides Thee alone not only all without, but all within me, is Misery and Want. And otherwise than wretched I cannot be, when distracted by the vast variety of worldly Objects, and drawn off Thee, the supreme Good. I pursue first one, and then another, but cannot meet with Satisfaction from Any: I starve in the midst of Plenty, and am but mock'd with the empty pomp of a Feast, when my Soul feeds upon any thing but Thee, for thou alone canst fatisfy my Hunger, asswage my Pains, and fill my large Defires.

How wretched, doubly wretched, is that Soul, which forfakes Thee, with whom is Fulness and Joy; to follow the World, where it is fure to fuffer Poverty and Pain? The World cries out, I cannot fatisfy Thee; Thou fayeft, Eat and let thy Soul be fatisfied; and yet (fuch is the perverseness of my Appetite) I follow after that which cannot, and forfake that which can and would content me. Correct, O Spiritual Physician, this diforderly Eagerness for Trash, and, help me to relish the wholesom Food of Souls: John 6. 27. And to lubour for that meat which enduretb to everlasting life.

The great things thou hast done for me already encourage me to ask and hope for more. I was not, and thou gavest me Being; I was lost, and thou hast restored me; dead and thou hast raised me: Thou endureds Death to purchase my Life: and, tho' the King of Heaven, deliveredst up thy Person to ransom the least and most unworthy of thy Subjects. Thy Blood was not thought a price too dear for my Redemption, and I may truly fay, that in some sense, thou lovedst me better than thy felf, fince thou wert content to die for my fake. By fo gracious a Covenant, by fo precious aRanfom, am I redeemed from Slavery and Exile, from Punishment and Death. And, that the Remembrance of fuch aftonishing Mercies might be for ever fresh and present with me, thou hast called me by thy Name, mark'd me for thy own with thy Blood, and anointed me with that Oile of the holy Spirit, with which thyfelf wast anointed, I John 2. 20. And diftinguished me with the most honourable of all Titles, that of Christian. Thus have thy Grace and Mercy all along prevented me. And infinite are the Dangers from which thou hast delivered me. Thou hast been my Guide and Teacher, when I strayed through Ignorance; my Reprover and Corrector when I offended through Carelefness or Presumption; my Comfort in Trouble, my Support in Despair; when I fell, thou tookest me up; when I stood, it was because thou upheldest me, when I advanced, thou Conductedit me; when I approached, thou receivedst me: when I slept, thou didst on two federal work a come was he designard

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guard me; when I cry'd, thou didst hear and answer me.

VI CHAP, IX.

Of God's seeing all the Actions and Intentions of Men.

The ESE and inumerable other Mercies, I thankfully ascribe to Thee, my God, and recollect with such a sensible delight, that I could dwell upon them for ever; to love thee with all my Heart, and Mind, and Strength, and with every faculty and part of my Soul and Body, be constantly employed in Praising Thee. O how blessed are those pious Men who can rejoice in Thee! But Thou my God, seest all my Impersections, and how far distant I am from this Happiness. Thy Eyes are a thousand times more piercing than the Sun, penetrating the deepest and darkest recesses, Prov 15. 3. and watching continually in every place to behold the evil and the good.

For Thou, who fillest and governest all things, hast a constant regard to the Work of thy own Hands; hadst thou not loved thy Creatures, thou hadst not made them; And the same love which made, will always continue to guide, and preserve, and watch over them. Thus thou art ever present with me, always marking well my goings, and numberest all my Steps; Thou standest over me

as a watchfullCentinel, and observest me as nicely, as if all Care of every thing besides had been dismist, and I remain'd the only Object of thy Concern; For so entire so unalterable is the perfection of thy Sight and Knowledge, that it is neither more exact by being confined to One, Object, nor at all perplexed or confused by taking into View the most distant and even innumerable. Because, as thou confiderest the whole with all its Parts in One distinctly, so dost thou See All, though never to many, never fo different, never fo remote; and feelt them all together, with one and the same act of thy whole Divine Knowledge. This is of fuch unbounded comprehension, so incapable of being separated in its own operation, or distracted with variety of Objects, that One and Many are the fame, and both understood and observed alike, because falling alike under the same undivided and entire Wisdom, which applies the whole of itself to the confideration of each and every thing.

And thus I ought to believe myfelf, and every thing belonging to me, as much under thy Eye, as if thy Providence had no other Care. For Thou art always present, always ready, if thou do but find Me fo. Wherefoever I go, thou goest along with me, except I first forsake and fall from Thee-Where-ever I am thou abideft with me for Thou art every where; that I may find thee upon every remove, and so subsist by thee, for otherwise I must perish, not being able to subsist without Thee, I must acknowledge then, that every thing

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I do is done in thy Presence; and thou understandes est every Action, and the Nature of it much better than even I who am the Doer of it. For let me do what I will, and when I will, still thou are present at all Times equally; an incessant Observer of all my Views and Intentions, my Inclinations and inward Complacencies, my Words and Actions. So good reason have I to cry out with David, Psal 38. 9. 139. 2. Lord thou knowest all my desires, and understandes my thoughts afor off.

Thou feeft how the Spirit moves me, whence it comes, where it refts, and whither it tends; because thou art the weigher of the Spirits. The outward Act, like a well-leaved Tree, may be fair and flourishing, and impose upon the Eyes of Men; but the Allseeing Judge goes deeper, he examines the Sap and Root throughly. If this be rotten or bitter, if the intention be corrupt, he deals with the Tree according to its Root, and recompences the Man according to the bent of his Heart. The Evil that he would do is punished, and the Good he endeavoured and heartily defired to do, but could not, is as kindly accepted, as if it had been actually accomplished. Thou seeft, as foon as I begin to move what I would be at; what I defign and delight in; Thy Ears & Eyes are ever open; Thou attendest diligently and entrest punctually into thy Book, whatever I do, whether it be good or whether it be Evil, that the One may receive a bountiful Reward, the other its deserved Punishment. And this shall surely

ly be Ex7. 10. Rev 20. 12. when the books shall be opened, and all mankind shall be judged out of the things which are written in those books, according to their works.

Thus may we understand what is said of thee, that thou searchest out all perfection; because in human Actions thou hast a greater regard to what we wish and intend to do, than to what we really do. And when I seriously consider, that this is the method by which thou proceedest, Shame and Consusion Fear and horrible Dread, sink my Spirits; to think how holy and upright, how pure and sincere, all our intentions and behaviour ought to be, since we do every thing in the sight of our Judge; A Judge on whom no disguise can impose, but who does not only see our Actions, but perfectly discern our most secret Thoughts.

CHAP, X. at am pare

The impotence of human Nature to refift Temptations, without the Affistance of Divine Grace.

O Lord, The God of the spirits of all flesh, Num. 16. 22. whose Eyes are upon all the ways of the Sons of Men, from the very Instant of their entrance into this World, to that of their departure out of it, that thou mayst render to every Man according to his Doings; bring me, I beseech thee, acquainted with my self;

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that I may be truly sensible of my Weakness and my Wants. I have indeed prefumed to fay, but they were but vain boafts, that I was rich, and Stood in need of nothing; while alas! I was Rev. 3. 17 poor, and blind, and naked, and miferable, and weak. Thus I thought myself something, when in truth I was nothing; Rom 1. 23. and profeshing myfelf to be wife I became a fool. I arrogated the little good I had to my own Wisdom and Diligence, James 1. 17. but thou hast undeceived my partial Mistakes, and convinced me now effectually, that every excellency is entirely thy Gift, John 15. 5. that without thee we can do nothing; and as the Pfalmist well observes Pfal 127. I. Except thou Lord, art pleased to keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain. Thou haft taught me experimentally, of how little fignificance human Strength and Industry are, by leaving me for a while deflitute of thy Help, and bringing my supposed abilities to the Proof. Not for thy better information, who knewest me perfeetly before, but in order to the creating in me right Notions of myself; and abating that unjust esteem I entertained for qualifications not yet understood. For it is true, my God, I did not only think myself something, but that my being wasowing to myfelf; and that my own Strength was fecurity sufficient; Nor did I discover, that my Safety was the effect of thy Guidance and Protection, till thou thoughest fit to withdraw thyself for a season, and sufferedst me to fall for want want of thy Support. By this Event, alas! I had but too sensible and too sad a Demonstration; that all I did commendably before was the effect of thy gracious Governance; that my Misery and my Fall was properly my own, but my Recovery and my Standing, thine and only thy Doing.

Thus hast thou in Mercy opened my Eyes, and awakened me out of my deceitful Dream; by letting me fee, that Job. 4. 1. Man is appointed to a state of warfare upon earth, that Dangers and Temptations beset him every where, that no Flesh can have whereof to glory before God, in hopes to be justified in the fight of their Almighty Judge; fince whatever good thing we have or do, be the Proportion less or more, still the whole is thy Gift; and nothing truly our own but our Sins and our Miseries. And what shall Man then find to glory of? Of his Sins and Miseries? That were most absurd, a Cause of Shame and Sorrow, but none of Boasting or Selfsatisfaction. What then? Of any Good? No, not that neither; for this is equally absurd, to glory of that which is not our own, but another's. For Thine O Lord, is all the Good, and confequently Thine, all the Glory. He that assumes to himself the Honour of the Good that is Thine, the same is a Thief and a Robber, and thus far resembles the Devil himfelf, that he would usurp upon the Majesty and Property of his Master. He that is ambitious of Praise for thy Gifts, and aims not at promoting thy Honour, but his own, how profuse soever Men

Men may be in their Commendations of him. yet Thou wilt be fure to reproach and condemn him for his Arrogance and Injustice. And what shall the Praise of Men then profit him? For though they extol never so much, yet if thou disapprove, they shall not be able to defend him when thou sittest in Judgement, nor to deliver him from Vengance, when thy awful Voice shall Pass the

fatal Sentence upon him.

Therefore, O Lord, who hast formed and fustained me from my Morher's Womb, suffer me not I implore thee, to fall under that Condemnation, of attempting to steal away any Part of thy Glory. Thine is all the Good, and fit it is that thine should be all the Honour of it. To me belongs only Confusion of Face and Misery unspeakable; for mine is all the Evil, and of that Evil this must be the Consequence, unless thy Mercy interpose and rescue me. But Thou, my Lord, wilt have mercy; Thy Mercy extends to all thy Works, and thou hatest nothing that thou hast made; Thou impartest to us of thy own Goodnels. and enricheft us with many excellent Gifts; having declared thyself, Psal 113, 6, a Lover of the Poor; and a Provider for their Necessities out of thy hid Treasures. Behold we are poor Luke 6. 20. we are thy needy Children, thy little Flock; open to us thy Gates, Pfal 22, 26, that the poor may eat and be satisfied, and the heart of them that feek thee, may praise thee and live for ever. Luke 1, 52, 53, 14. 11. For I am taught, that none but

but they who see, and acknowledg, and lament their Poverty, shall be enriched by Thee; Matth 5. 3. while the Rich and Great in their ownConceits, (who are the least and wretchedly indigent of all others) shall be sent empty away, and and left to perish in their own Sufficiency.

In a due Sense of this Dispensation, I most humbly confess my spiritual Poverty; that I have nothing of my own; and if any good Action have been done by me, the Honour of it is entirely thine, because the Good itself was thy Gift. I do look upon myfelf to be no better than Vanity, a Mass of Corruption, a dark and empty Creature, a barren Soil, not able, without the fructifying Dew of thy Bleffing, to bring forth any Fruit, but the Venomous and noisome Weeds of Shame andSin, and Death, if I have any good Disposition, it is of thy infusing; If I have persevered in doing well, it is because thy strength enabled me: If I sell off from a good Course, it was because thy Grace did not preserve me; and in each of those Relapses I had lain and been loft for ever, had not thy mighty Hand raised me out of the Dust of Death. Thy Light alone delivered me from Blindness, thy Defence from Temptations, thy Support from Relaples, and thy continual Governance from final Misery and Ruin irrecoverable.

Thus hath thy Goodness, O God, prevented me in all the Events and Exigencies of my Life; rescuing me out of all Evils, sustaining and detending me against the present, and arming me against

gainst the future. Hewing in pieces the Nets and Snares laid to entrap my Soul, and taking out of the way the Occasions and Allurements to Sin, which hadft thou not done for me, there is not in the World a Crime fo black, but I might have been guilty of it. For this I know, O Lord. that there is no Sin ever committed by any Man. which any other Man is not capable of committing too, if that Almighty Power which made him Man, be not at hand with its Affistance. But what I could not do for myfelf, thou hast vouchsafed in much Mercy to do for me: Thou laidst upon methy Commands, and didst fignify what I ought to abstain from: Thou gavest to these Commands the Sanction of Promises and Threatnings, and to thy Grace alone I ascribe my believing the one and the other. Thou hast govern'd and preserved me to Thee and to myself; and, by thy leasonable and happy Restraints, I have been kept from Adultery, Murther, and Blasphemy, and every heinous Violation of thy Laws, which otherwise had provoked thy Displeasure, and certainly incurred my own Damnation.

Sometimes there was no Tempter to persuade me to do amiss; and, that there was no such at hand, was the effect of thy merciful Providence. At other times the Tempter was ready, and had done his Part; but for want of fit Time and Place, the Temptation could not take Effect: This also was from the same good Providence. At others

he laid the Bait, Place was convenient, Opportunity was inviting, and then, by thy restraining Grace, I was with-held from complying with his black and deceitful Allurements. Sometimes he made his Approaches in the Dark, black and loathsome as he is; and thy Assistance enable me to discover and detest his Deformities. Luke II. 21. Sometimes the strong man arm'd attacked me with open Force, and hoped to carry me by Terror and Storm; and in these Conflicts thou hast so powerfully restrained him, and strengthen'd me, that I have not only stood the Shock, but come of Conqueror. Sometimes he hath accosted me in a bright and beautiful Figure, 2 Cor 11. 14. and there he transformed bimfelf into an angel of light; and thou hast rebuked him, and opened my Eyes in time, to detect his borrowed Difguises. For this is the Rev. 12. 1 2. red Dragon, the old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, baving feven beads and ten borns; the great Leviathan, whom thou hast made to take his Pastime upon the vast Ocean of the World, Psal 104, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts; that is, several Kinds of evil Spirits working Mischief Day and Night, 1 Pet 5. 8. and going about continually, feeking whom they may devour. And devour they certainly will, except thou the great Shepherd of Souls, deliver the Prey out of their hungry Jaws.

This is he who appeared in the form of a Serpent in Paradife, Gen 3 1. Rev. 12. 4. whose tail

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drew down a third part of the Stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth; who poisons the Waters, that Men may drink of the invenomed Liquor and die; Job 40. 23. 41. 13. who trusteth that he can draw up fordan in his mouth, and is made without fear. And who can defend himself from his greedy Ravenings, except thou, Lord, deliver him, Psalm 74. 13. who breakest the Heads of the great Dragon? Do thou therefore help and protect us, hide us under the Shadow of thy Wings, and shield us from the Force of the Monster's Horns. For this is his constant Employment, this his only Desire and Endeavour, to destroy and

fwallow up Souls which thou hast made.

To Thee therefore, our God, we flee. to Thee we cry for Defence against our daily and our deadly Foe; who, whether we fleep or wake, whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we are employed about, is Night and Day making War against us, by cunning Stratagems and a thousand unconceivable Arts of Delusion. Sometimes in open Field, sometimes from private Ambuscades aiming his poison'd Darts at us, that he may slay our Souls. And yet, so wretchedly stupid, so perverfely mad are we, that though we know and fee this fierce Dragon is ever making at us with open Mouth, still we can fold our Hands to sleep, indulge ourselves in Ease and sloth, and wantonly fport upon the Brink of Ruin, as if no Danger threaten'd us, His constant Endeavour is our Destruction, and upon this he is so eagerly intent, while sleep secure, and will not so much as be awakened into one serious Thought of our Chief, our Everlasting Concern. And what, alas! must need become at last, of Creatures, whom the Enemy uses so much Industry to destroy, and They so very little to preserve themselves?

For infinite, God knows, are our Hazards, and all our Way is spread so thick with Traps and Toils that we cannot tread one Step where there is not some Net laid for our Souls. And whose Wisdom and Care is sufficient to escape them all? Snares in our Plenty, and Snares in our Poverty: Snares in our Company, and Snares in our most private Retirments: Snares in our Pleasures and the ordinary Refreshments of Life; and Snares in our very Fastings and most mortifying Austerities. Abroad or at home, asleep or awake, we are never fafe; but every Word and Action, every Thought and Design is hazardous and enfnaring. Such is our Condition, and fo manifold our Danger. But do thou, Lord, deliver us from the Toils of the Hunter, that we may give Thanks unto thy Name, faying with the holy Psalmist: 124. 1. 3. 6. 7, If the Lord bim-felf had not been on our side, our enemies had swallowed us up quick : But praised be the Lord, who bath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our Soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are delivered.

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Do thou, O gracious God, my Life and Light, in order to compleat this Deliverance, enlighten my Eyes, that I may fee thy Light, and walk in it. For who can escape the Snares he does not see? And who can fee them except thou open his Eyes, and direct his unwarySteps? ThePrince of Darkness works in the Dark, and spreads his Ness unfeen; and the Children of Darkness fall into them, because destitute of thy Light, John 11. 9, 10. For if any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because be seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the nighthe stumbleth, because there is no light in him. Now thou, my God, art the Light which alone can guide us; thou art the Light of the Children of Light, the Day that never declines, and they who walk in thee, tread fure and safe; but they who want Thee, are still in the thickest Night, and know not whither they go.

This is most manifest from daily Experience, that the more a Man wanders from Thee, the more he is bewildred in the Night of Ignorance and Error, of Sin and Confusion; and the more gross the Darkness about him is, the less he is capable of discerning his Danger; the oftner he is entangled the deeper he falls, and is not sensible that he does so. And how should he be solicitous to rise again, who does not perceive the Necessity of such an Attempt, but fondly thinks he stands, even when he falls most desperately? How shall that Patient ever find a Cure, who hath no Apprehension

prehension of his Disease? So great Occasion have I to be importunate with Thee, my God and Light. that thou wouldst enlighten my Eyes, and shew me the true State of my Case, that I may see my Way, and rightly apprehend my Danger, and not be overthrown before my cruel Adversaries. Isai 14. For our common Enemy intends no less than our utter Destruction: He is a Robber from the beginning, and fuch he will continue to the End of the World. He first formed a Design of invading thy Glory, and, for a Punishment of that unjust and sacrilegious Pride, was cast out of thy holy Mountain. and now, fince that Fall from Heaven, he still carries on his wicked Defigns with indefatigable Industry and Malice, labouring with all his Might to undermine thy Children; and in implacable Despite to Thee, to destroy the Creature honoured above the rest, by being made after thy own Image, and defigned to inherit that Glory with thyself, from which he by his proud Presumtion fell, But, O thou Shepherd of Israel, break in pieces the Heads of this ravening Wolf, let him not tear and devour thy Lambs; but lead thy Flock safely, and conduct them at last to thyself. Isai 37. 28. Thou knowest his going out, and his coming in, and his rage against us: Thou feest through all his cunning Disguises, and canst with Ease Detect his subtilest Devices. Nor do I mention these to inform thee of them; for thou knowest all things, and the secretest Imaginations are not hid from thee: But

But I lament my Danger, and my own Disability, that Thou, my Judge, may'ft see how senfible I am of both, that thy Compassion may come in to my Assistance, and disapoint our Enemy and thine, and save those Souls, whose Strength

thou art alone.

Our Enemy is wondrous crafty, and his Contrivances are so disguised, that, except thou open our Eyes, we cannot eafily discover what it is he aims at nor diftinguish this deadly Foe from a very affectionate Friend. For he conveys himself into every Place, and is dextrous beyond what is possible to conceive, at putting on all manner of Shapes, Sometimes he appears like himself a raging Wolf, or a black Fiend; at other times he feems a meek and gentle Lamb, and is transformed into an Angel of Light. He watches all our Motion, observes what Posture our Affairs are in, and accommodates his Temptations to the Humour, the Occasions, the Events and Fortunes of each Person: He considers the Times the Places, the critical Junctures, in which these are most likely to prevail, and is fure to fall in with those that are most tayourable to his mischievous Purpoles. He counterfeits Melancholy, that he may delude the Sorrowful and Dejected; and Jollity, that he may betray the Sprightly and Gay; he wears Sheep's Cloathing, that he may deceive the Secure,; and all the favage Fierfness of the Wolf, that he may terrify the Fearful. Thus does he manage Matters with such a fatal Address, Pial

Night, and others with the Annows, that fly by Day; others tainted with the secret Pestitence of Lusts that walk in Darkness, and others destroy'd by the open Profaneness and impudent Vices that wast at Noon-day. And who is sufficient for these things? What Prudence, what Caution can be a Match for such intricate impostures? Job 41. 13: Who can discover the face of his garment, or bridle up the teeth of this tyrannical Levisthan?

Behold he hides his Arrows fecretly in his Quiver, and hits us fuddenly, when we are least in tear. While he covers his Hooks with precious Baits, and fets his Traps out of Sight, he draws us into Misery and Death by false Appearances of Happiness, and under the Pretence of Kindness and Friendship: And these things pass upon us very eafily, unless thou, Lord, help us to pull of the Mask, and detect his Sleight of Hand, with which the crafty Juggler deludes our credulous Sight. Were we in Danger only from acknowledged Vice, and the Works of the Fiesh, the Matter were not so hard to guard ourselves against him. But, alas! be turns our own Artillery upon us, and hath thousand ways of compassing his Ends and our Destruction, by our very Virtues and Graces, by our Devotions and most spiritual Exercises. And this is properly to transform himfelf into an Angel of Light, when he makes us ten times more the Children of Hell, by perverting those very Methods which seem to have the noft

most direct tendence to Heaven. These, and in numerable other Stratagems. to me unknown, this Son of Belial finds out, and in some or other of them is perpetually exercising himself to our eternal mischief: Psal 141. 10. But do thou, O Lord, here the Snares of the ungodly in pieces, and let him not triumph over us. 112. 20. Let him fall into his own nets, and let me ever escape them; that he may gnash with his teeth, and consume away with Envy and rage, at the perishing of his own defires, and thou mayest be glorified in our Preservation, Psal 17. 7. O thou who art the Saviour of all that put their trust in thee, from such as resist thy right hand.

CHAP, XI.

The manifold Goodness of God, and what Improvement we should make of it,

on every remembrance of thy Favour already vouchfafed me. And therefore behold thy Servant and Son of thy Handmaid, acknowledging with all Humility, and thankfully recounting the many Mercies with which thou hast prevented, preserved, and particularly bless'd me from my Youth up to this very Day. Herein I exercise my self the rather, in a due sense and detestation of logratitude, how odious a Sin it is in itself, and how very displeasing to Thee, For this is the Ruin of

of all that is Good: The Dam that stops the current of thy Mercy, else ever overflowing upon Mankind: The Seed of Vice though killed, by this revive and sprout up afresh in our Hearts; and the most thriving Virtues, where this balefulQuality enters, are imediately poysoned and stinted, grow fickly, fade away and die. Therefore I will give thanks to my God, that I fall not into this miserable State, nor lie under the dangerous influences and indelible reproach of a Sin, so malignant in its quality and effects, as that of Ingratitude.

O Lord! my Deliverer, how often hath the roaring Lion opened his Mouth upon me, and thou hast drawn me from between his Teeth, by quashing the Temptation? How often have I wickedly complied, aand done the Fact and he stood ready to carry off the Prey, but thou hast defended me from the Hell I had deferved. Thus my Offences against thee were repaired, by the Manifestations of thy Power and Goodness in the defence of me. I was not afraid, nor stood in awe of Thee, and thou didst keep a strict and impregnable Guard for my Preservation. I departed from Thee, and furrendered myself to the Enemy: Thou wouldst not suffer him to take the Advantage, nor Me to be Ruined; even by my own Act and Deed. These benefits my Gracious God conferr'd, and yet so blind was I, as not to see them. For after this manner hast thou fnatched my Soul from him, that would have Destruction, when I was not in the least sensible how near I was to it. I have ventured to the very brink of the Precipice, and thou hast plucked me back when dropping into it. I was at the very Gates of Death, and thou hast restrained the Grave

from shutting her Mouth upon me.

Nor hath the Care of this kind Providence been confined only to my Soul, my Body also hath felt its good Effects. For often hast thou, my God and Saviour, restored me from the Bed of Languishing, healing those Diseases which had baffled all human skill, preferved and protected me by Sea and Land, in perils of Fire and Sword, thielding me from many a fore Thrust, and putting by Deaths innumerable which were levelled at my Head: Standing over, and covering me with the shadow of thy Wings, from all manner of hurt and and danger, And this thou didft, as I have reason to believe, in great compassion to my poorSoul, confidering how unprovided Iwas for fo important a Change; and that, had I been then hurried out of the World, Hell and eternal Mifery must have been my Portion. So that thy Grace and Mercy, thus prevented me, have rescued me from a two-fold Death, and secured Body and Soul at once by the same Suspension of the fatal Stroke; and by thus lengthening out my Life, laid a foundation for my living to all Eternity. These and many other Benefits I have received at thy bountiful Hand; and I stupid wretch regarded

regarded not, nay, was fo blind as not to fee them, till the Light from above open'd my Eyes. But now, thou God of my Life, by whom I live, thou Light of my Eyes, by which I see, I have received the influence of thy bright Beams. and am brought to a due fight and fense of Thee and thy Goodness; and most heartily return my Thanks, the best I can, though most disproportionate to the Mercies for which they are due. For thou only art my God and most merciful Creator, a lover of Souls, and hating nothing that thou haft made: And I alas! with shame confess myself the Chief of Sinners, in whom thou hast shewn all long-suffering for a Pattern to them whose sinful and miserable State shall hereafter render them Objects of thy Clemency and Compassion.

I acknowledge thy Mercies to be unspeakably great, for delivering my Soul from the nethermost bell; not once, or twice, or thrice, but hundreds, and thousands, and millions of times: I was perpetually driving thither, and Thou as constantly checking my furious Career, and turning me back again, And, had not thy own goodness loved me better than I loved myself, thou hadst e're this funk me into the bottomless Pit the thousand times over. But such is thy Tenderness, that thou wilt not fuffer us to undo our felves, and makest as though thou sawest not our Offences, that thy forbearance may win us to Repentance. So full of Mercy are all thy Ways, O God; Which I now plainly perceive, and have a deep and grateful Sense of, and am even lost in Wonder and Amazement at the Kindness which hath all along watched over me for good, and faved both Body and Soul from the Death which had otherwise long fince swallowed them up. For I was entirely in the hands of Death. and thou restored me entire to Life. Thine therefore be the whole of this which lives by thy clemency, and every part of me conspires in offering every part of me, a Sacrifice of Praise. This whole Spirit, and Soul, and-Body, and all that Life resulting from the mutual Union of These, shall from henceforth be confecrated to the God of my Life; for thou restoreds me All, that Thou mightest keep me All for thy own; And therefore I will love my Strength and my Deliverer, and live no longer to my self, but Thee. The whole of my Life was loft and gone in Misery, the whole was restored and given me afresh by thy Mercy: For thou art Pfalm 86. 15. Exod. 20. 6. Deut. 6 4. a God full of compassion, long suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth, and shewing mercy unto thoufands in them that love thy name.

Now at length, O Lord my God, I plainly perceive the Equity of that command. which Matth. 22. 38. enjoins me to love thee with all my heart, and with all my mind, and with all my foul, and with all my strength. at all times, with the most ardent and never ceasing Affection; Because I should perish each moment, didst not thou renew the Gift of Life by thy Preservation

and

and Continuance of it, and every Moment thou bindest me faster to thee, by the Addition of new, and Repetition of former Benefits. As therefore no Hour, no Minute passes by, without some instance of thy Bounty; so it is fit that none should país, without my grateful and affectionate remembrances of fo kind a Benefactor; without fuch zealous and constant Love of so good a God. as my frail Nature, and narrow Soul can extend to. This is indeed what ought to be, but yet it is what will not, cannot be, unless the same hand give the Grace of Gratitude, which gives the Obligation to the Duty : James 17. For every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down from above, and is from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Rom 9. 16. And it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runeth, but at thee who sheweth mercy, that I must be enabled to love thee. Thine Lord, is the Gift, as thine is every thing that is good. Thou commandest that I should love thee, grant me the Power to do whatfoever thou commandest, and then command whatfoever thou pleafest.

But still the more I restect on Thee, and on my self, the greater occasion I find to ask again and again, how is it possible for me to love thee to the degree that I ought, or where shall I meet with Words to express the engagements I have to do so. If I look back to the first production of my Nature, the several Priviledges, by which thou hast distinguished Mankind from all his Fel-

low Creatures here below, are not only highly valuable, but even aftonishind Marks of thy Favour. The Honour of being formed after thy own Image, those Characters of the Divine Excellencies impressed upon the nobele Faculties of my Soul, setting me far above the vegetable and merely sensible World, and approaching to the Dignity of those intellectual Spirits above; the Angels that minister about thy Throne, and are allowed to partake in the Glories of thy beauteons Presence; the ample Provisions made for our convenience and Delight, and that Dominion Manwas invested with, over the Work of thy Hands

in these Regions about him.

And what can I suppose thy Wisdom design'd Pfal 8. 6. by putting all things in subjection under the feet of Man, but to teach him, that his Sujection was refurved to Thee alone; That he should devote himself entirely to thy Service, whom fo many other things were ordained to ferve? For in this order the Creation feems plainly to proceed. The things without us were framed for the use of our Body, the Body for the Soul, the Soul for Thee; that, freed from the Distraction of serving any thing besides, Thou mightest remain the only proper Object of its care, while it possesses Thee for its Joy and Happines, and ultimate End, and Creatures of a lower Rank for its Comfort and Convenience, as Means tending to the attainment of that End. For all contained within the compals of those bright Orbs above

above us, are in their own Nature, and in thy purpose, inferior to the human Soul, and made subservient to that. But This was made so far like them, as to be subservient to some Good aboye it too, that it might ferve and grasp at That. and poffers that which it would be exquisitely happy in the enjoyment of. And if it get above the mean affections of fuch mutable things as are unworthy of its chief concern, and fix its Thoughts and Defires upon Thee alone, it shall advance to a nearer refemblance of the Supreme Perfection, whose likeness is were, and be admitted to a clear Vision of the Divine Majesty in immortal Bliss. Then shall it be possest securely of all those precious and inestimable Treasures in the House of its Lord, with which if all wee see and use to be fond of here are put into the Balance, Pfal 62. 9. they will be found altogether deceitful upon the weights, and lighter than even Vanity it felf. These are the Glories which thou wilt one Day confer upon human Souls: And in the mean while, by the prospect of them, thou dost support and fill thy Saints with Jay and Comfort inexpressible.

Such large deligns of Happinels and Glory might rather be thought Just matter of Wonder than of Belief and Expectation, were it not that in doing so much Honour to Man, thou dost it to thy felf; and exaltest thy own Likeness and Copy, by receiving it into this Union with its Divine Original. Nor can I suffer my self to doubt. that any measure of kindness will be thought too

great

great for the Soul, when I reflect how much thou hast already shewn to this corruptible and viler part of us, the Body. For even to every fense and organ of This thy Liberality is admirable. The Sun and Moon are daily in Attendance, and (in Obedience to thy wife Appointments) ferve thy Children by fixt and regular Successions of Heat and Cold, of Light and Darkness. The brightness thou hast given for an entertainment to our Sight; the pure and fubtle Air for liberty of Brea. thing; the difference of harmonious Sounds to charm our Ears; the fragrant Perfumes to feast the Smell; variety of Relishes for our Taste; and the tactile Qualities of Bodies to exercise our Touch. Cattle of several forts to affift us in our Toil, and lighten the Labour of supporting Life; Fowls of the Air, and Fish of the Sea, and Fruits of the Earth for our Sustenance and Refreshment: Plants and Minerals; whose healing Virtues may relieve the Pains and Distempers we are subject to and, though thy Wisdom hath thought fit to leave us liable to many grievous bodily Sufferings, yet thou haft furnished us with proper Remedies to affwege or remove each of them. Such is the pity and love of Him who made us, and who knows our frame: The Almighty Potter, in whose Hands we are the Clay, thus taking care to preserve the brittle Vessels he hath made.

But while I am thus endeavouring to beget in my Soul worthy Apprehensions of thy bounteous Mercy, pour I beseech thee, from above the light of of thy Grace, which may enlarge the prospect, and from these little things below, get above the Objects and the Comforts of Sense; help me to make a right judgment of the Great, and invisible Above which our Great Creator hath prepared for our immortal Spirits. For if my God be fo folicitous about a thing so mean, and of so short and perishing a nature as this mortal Body; if the Heavens and the Air, Seas and Land, Light and Darkness, scorching Heats and refreshing Shades; If Showers and Dew, Winds and Storms, Fowls and Fishes, Beasts and Vegitables; if Herbs and Trees, the artful and the voluntary Productions of the Earth, do all conspire to serve us, and so affiduously perform their part to entertain us with a variety, that may render Life not only supportable, but even delightful: What are the Comforts, what the Entertainments? How great, how rich, how innumerable, how unconceivable, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, in that heavenly Country where they shall behold thee Face to Face? If fuch Provision be made for us in our Prison, what may we expect to find in our Palace?

Great and Marvellous are thy Works, O King of Heaven. For fince all those things are exceeding pleasant and good, which thou hast imparted to good and evil Men in common, how much better must we suppose those to be, whichs thou hast reserved as the Portion peculiar to the Good only? If thy Gifts are so many, and so various, which

which at present thy Enemies, as well as thy Friends, have a there in, how noble and how unmeasurable, how deliciously sweet and charming must those needs be, which none but thy Friends are thought worthy to partake of? If in our Day of Mourning there are to many Comforts afforded us, what shall be our Joys in the day of our Nupsuals? If our Dungeon, and our Exile have for many refreshments, what shall be the felicities of our own Home, the Native Soil of our Souls, the magnificent Court of the King of Heaven? furely my God, no Eye hath feen, or can fee the things thou haft prepared for thy faithful and beloved, unless thou who hast prepared, do also vouchsafe to reveal them. Eccles 2. 18. For asis thy Majesty, so is thy Mercy; Pial 31. 19. and infinite is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, infinite as thy own effential Happiness, and the inexhaustible multitude of thy Mercies.

For Thou, Lord, art great, incomprehenfibly great, thy Power knows no Bounds, thy Wisdom no Number, thy Kindness no Measure; Neither do thy Rewards and gracious Gifts, which are in every respect worthy of, and of an extent equal to thy felf. They must be so because Thou thy felf art the Reward of thy Saints, the Hope of them that combat in this spiritual Warfare, 2 Tim 2. 5. the Crown of them that strive lawfully, and the

Joy and Triumph of them that conquer.

MEDITATIONS. 249 CHAP. XII.

The Confideration of the Divine Goodness, our Hope and Comfort in Sufferings.

HESE, O my God, are the many, the mighty Benefits, with which thou one Day haft decreed to fatisfy the Wants and Cravings of thy needy Children. For thou art the Hope of them, whom all other hopes have forfaken. Thou art the Crown of Glory, which shall adorn every head Thou the Eternal fulness of. that overcometh. those Blessed Souls, who hunger and thirst after thy Righteousness and Kingdom. Thou the neverfailingComfort,communicating thyfelf to none but fuch as are content to forego, nay, have learnt to despise all worldly Comforts, in order to obtain thy everlasting and spiritual ones in Exchange. For they who fet up their Rest, and seek their Satisfactions here, are reputed unworthy of those thou hast reserved for thine Elect hereafter. But they who are tormented here are comforted hereafter; and fuch as bear a part in the fufferings. shall not fail to obtain a share in the consolations. of their Lord and Saviour. For matters are fo ordered by thy Wisdom, that no Man can have his Joys and Consolations here and hereafter both; Mat: 6. 24 God and Mammon cannot both be ferved: to divide our felves between them, is to lose all pretence of Reward from either; and Heaven and the World, Spiritual and Temporal, are Objects

Objects so distant, things so incompatiable, that he who resolves in good earnest to enjoy the One, is unavoidably obliged to give up all pretensions to the other.

Upon these Considerations my Soul refuses to be comforted, and to find her Happiness in this Life, and rather chuses and begs of thee, my Lord and Comforter, that these may be reserved for her future and eternal State. Acknowledging it most equitable, that every one should lose thee, who prefers any other thing before thee. And therefore I make it my most earnest request, that thou wilt not suffer me to take up with any treacherous empty Comforts, such as will defert me when I stand in most need of them. But rather give me a general difgust, and make all things besides Bitter and Loathsome to me, that my Soul may delight itself in nothing but my God, whose charming Sweetness is of that invincible Efficacy, as even to sweeten the bitterest Afflictions that can possibly befall a Man in this Valley of Tears and Trouble.

Transported with the ravishing foretaste of this Bliss, thy first Martyr St. Stephen Acts 7. received the shower of Stones poured on him by his Murderers with Triumph. Thy Apostles departed from the presence of the Council Acts 5. rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. St. Andrew marched to his Crucifixion without the least regret, because advancing to the possession of this Bliss. The

The two great Apostles submitted chearfully to Death, St. Peter by the Cross, St. Paul by the Sword. St. Bartholomew thought he made a prudent bargain, when flead alive, to purchase it with his Skin. St. John drunk up the poisoned Cup without the least figns of Fear. St. Peter long before upon a taste of this unspeakable delight, Matth 17. cryed out it is good for us to be bere, we ask no other Happiness. Such mighty Efficacy had a drop of this Sweetness to create a Disrelish of all other Pleasures; And what can we suppose would have been the transports of his Soul, could he, while in the body, have drunk the fulness of thy Cup overflowing with Delights unspeakable? Some such an antepast we may imagine vouchsated to David, when he cry'd out with holy Zeal, Psal 31. 19. 34. 8. O bow great is thy Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! And again, O taste and see bow good the Lord is! This is the Bleffedness we live in hope of; This we firmly believe thy Bounty will one Day bestow upon us; for this we fight under our Lord's Banner against Sin, the World and the Devil; for the fake of this we are content to be killed all the day long, in affurance, that in Thee our Life, we shall live for ever.

But O thou hope of Israel, and desire of my Heart, after which I Sigh and Pant Night and Day Psal 44, 24 make half and tarry not. Arise and come, and bring us out of Prison, that we may give thanks unto thy Name, and rejoice in the

phibliam

Light

Light of thy Countenance. Let thine Ears be open to the Prayers of thy desolate Orphans, and hold not thy peace at their Tears; they cry to thee for their daily Bread, that, by the strength of that, they may be fulfained in their travels, and happily conducted to the wishedfor end of their Journey, even to thy holy Mountain. Amongst thele, I, the least and most unworthy to be call'd thy Son, lift up my Heart and Voice; confessing, that I have no right to cry to my heavenly Father, nor any defert that may challenge admittance into thy House; but begging notwithstanding, for thy own Mercies fake, what nothing elfe can juflify my asking, even that thy fervant may not be confounded, which puts his trust in Thee: For Pfal 63. 2. who shall enter into thy Sanctuary, there to behold thy power and glory, unless thou open to him? and if thou open, who shall shut? Job 12. 14. 15. If thou break down it cannot be built again: and if thou shut up, there can be no opening. If thou with-hold the waters, they dry up, and if thou fend them out, they overturn the earth. Job 11. 10. If thou cut off, and command all that thou hast made back into nothing again, who shall controul or hinder thee? Such is thy Power, and no less is thy Mercy, extending to every thing to which thou gavest Being. And therefore, we befeech thee, remember that we are a part of the World framed by thee; and preserve thy own Workmanship. Vile Earth though we are, Thou art the Maker, despise not the Vessels of thy own moulding.

moulding. Ashes and Worms cannot indeed aspire to the blassful Regions of Eternity, but that
Power which made all Things out of Nothing,
can find no difficulty in exalting even such as we
are thither; and that Goodness, which moved
thee to make them, is sufficient to prevail for making even thus Happy thy Creatures, which thou
wouldst not have made, hadst thou not intended

that they should be Happy.

Wifd 11. 24. In this alone will I place my Hope. I will not trust in my bow, it is not my froord that shall belp me : Pfal 44. 3 But thy right band and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hast favour to thy own Handywork. Thou knowest our frame and temper that we are all as a leaf that withereth, our life a blast and vapour upon earth, and every Man living altogether vanity. And these reflections give us confidence, that we shall find compassion for our Frailties. For will the God of matchless Strength exert his Power against dryStubble, driven about by every gust of Wind? 1Sam 24 14. Will the King of Ifrael hunt a Dog or a Flea? We have heard largely of thy Mercy, O Lord, Wild 1. 13. that thou didst not create death, neither hast pleasure in the destruction of the living, nor in the death of bim that dieth by his own perverfe Choice. Suffer not therefore, we befeech thee, that which thou never madest, to have dominion over the Creatures which thou didst make. For if thou art grieved as our Destruction, what can obstruct thy finding

ing Joy in our Life and Salvation? If thou wilt, thou canst save me, but I am not able without thee to save my self, though I would never so sain: For the number of my Miseies is very great

and their weight lies heavy upon me.

Rom 7. 18. To will indeed is present with me. but bow to perform that which is good I find not. Nay, even to will, that good is not in my disposal. and even what I have the power to do, I sometimes find not an inclination to do, except thou hear my Perition, that thy will may be done in earth as it is in Heaven. And what I would and could do, I know not how to fet about, unless thy wifdom shew the way, and enlighten my Eyes, that I may Discern and walk in it. Nay, father yet, although I know my Duty, and have the Will and Ability sometimes to discharge it; yet all my Knowledge is Vain and Imperfect, unless thy true Wildom, which descendeth from above, render my knowledge Active and Effectual, For to thy Will every thing is possible, and nothing can resist the great Lord of all. Let then thy Will be done in us, upon whom thy Name is called, that this noble Creature perish not, which thou hast formed for the illustration of thy own Glory, Psal 98. 48. For what man is be that liveth and shall not fee death, or who can deliver his foul from bell, unless thou please to work out his deliverance, who art alone the Source of Life, by whose lifegiving Influence all things Live?

. I have already ascribed my Strength to Thee,

and, with the most profound Humility, confessed, that I did formerly trust in my own Strength, which upon Trial proved no better than Weakness. When in this mistaken Persuasion I attempted to run, I fell where I thought my felf most able to stand. I stumbled and went backwards. and the prize I aimed at fled further from me, when I thought my felf making most directly up to it. Thus hast thou, by many Disappointments of my vain Confidence, brought me to a trueSight of my own impotent Condition. And by these Dispensations I was instructed, when that appeared least of all in my Power, which I imagined most easy to be Compass'd, without any succours from Abroad. How often have I boafted, that I would attempt this, or perform that good Action, and neither perform'd, nor to much as attempted either? How often was my Will not seconded. by Power? How often hath my Power loft all its Efficacy, for want of the Will to employ? And whence all this, but for want of looking up to him, from whence both the Will and the Power of doing good is derived, and thinking my felf absoluteMaster of both, when in truth I was fo of neither. But, being now brought to a better sense, I acknowledge before thee, my God and Father, 1 Sam. 29. 2Cor. 1. 19. that by his own proper strength no man shall prevail, and that it is but a Folly and vain Piesumption, when any flesh glories in thy presence. For it is not in Man alone to will the good he can do, nor to perfrom

form the good he would do, no, nor to know the good he would or could do: But all their Steps are guided by Thee; theirs I say, who are duly persuaded, that it is not by Themselves, but by thee that they are conducted in the ways of Holiness and Salvation, Wherefore we most earnestly implore thee by the Bowels of thy tender Mercies that thou wilt save the Creatures thou hast made, For if thou wilt, thou canst do it: and upon thy Will to do it depends the Strength of our Hopes, and the Certainty of our Salvation,

Call then to remembrance those tender mercies which have been ever of old. and to finish that Goodness in its utmost perfection Psal, 21, 3, with the bleffings whereof thou hast prevented me from the beginning, Well may I say, thou hast prevente me, For long before this Son of thy Handmaid was born, thou didst prepare the way wherein I should go, and by it be led to the Glories of thy House, Before thou hadst formed me in the Womb thou knewest me, and hadst determined all thy good pleasure Psal, 139, 19, Psal, 22, 9, concerning me; and ever fince Iwas Born I have been holden up by Thee, by Thee, my God and my Hope, even from my Mother's Breast,

For such is thy comprehensive and unchangeable Knowledge, that what I now expect thousands of Years to come, in thy Eternal Purpose, is fixed and done already: And, although with regard to the Event it be still suture, yet in thy Foresight and Decree it is already passed beyond the

the possibility of Reversal or Alteration, What this is, so far as I am concerned, stands indeed entered in thy Book; but I, who know not what thou hast determined, am full of Fear and Jealousies, The vast variety of Dangers, that threaten me on every Side, The Troops of Enemies combined against my Life, the numberless Miseries that obstruct and intercept my Course: These fill my Soul with such Perplexity and Dread, that weret not thou my Affistance and Support, I

should be lost and sunk into Despair.

But my Hope is great in Thee, my most merciful Pfal. 94. 19 King and my God, and in the multitude of the forrows which I have in my beart thy Comforts refresh my Soul. The fignal marks of thy Goodness, even before I was Born, in making such Provisions for my Happiness; The many more which have followed me fince, and been particular to Me, besides those common to other Men; These all forbid me to distrust, nay, they engage me to be very confident, that the past demonstrations of thy Love, are pledges and earnests of more and better Bleslings in reserve : That so much done on my behalf already was never intended to be loft; but what thou haft begun thou wilt graciously finish, and grant me in thy own due time Plal. 106. 5. 27. to fee the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of thy people and give thanks with thine Inheritance.

Why should I not believe and hope all this? Or how indeed can I do otherwise, when these

glorious Instances of thy Favour and Love occur to my Thoughts, fo often, but never too often, mentioned, 1 John 4. 29. O my Love and only Delight? Whom I love because thou first lovedst me; and provedst it by those precious Evidences, of creating me like thyself, preferring me in Honour above thy other Creatures, and instructing me how to keep up the dignity of my Character, which is then only preserved, when I know and ferveThee, for whose Use and Glory I was made,

The same large expectations are farther cherished by one reflection more, that of thy Angels being made Psal. 104. 4. Psal. 91. 11. 12. Ministring Spirits for me, and having a charge given them over me, to keep me in all my ways, lest at any time I burt my foot against a Stone. These are the Guards, the shining Centinels upon the new Psal, 105, 2, 1Peter 5, 8, Ferusalem, and thy Mountains round about her; keeping watch over thy Flock Night and Day, lest our adversary the devil, (that old Serpent, who like a roaring lion goes about continually feeking whom he may devour) should at any time surprize weak and unwary Pfal. 7. 2. Souls, and tear them in Pieces like a Lion, while there is none to belp. These are the Denizens of that bleffed City above, Gal. 4. Heb, 1 14. which is the mother of us all, sent forth to minister for them that shall be Heirs of Salvatiin, that they may support and conduct them safely : and who constantly behold the Face of their Father in Heaven, who

who hath committed his Matt. 18. 10, little ones to their Care. And great is their Affection towards their Fellow Citizens, as the Persons in whom they hope to see the Breaches of their own Order one Day repaired. Hence are they so wakefol and fo folicitous about us, fo ready to relieve us at every Time and Place, supplying our wants, and going diligently upon Dispatches between Us and Thee, our common Lord. 1 Cor 11. 10, Attending our Devotions, presenting our Requests before the Throne of Grace, and from thence conveying down the Bleffings we defire. These bright Attendants always keep us company, go in and out with us; observe how holy, how decently we behave ourselves in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation; Matt 6. 33. with what Zeal we feek thy kingdom, and the Righteousness thereof; with what fear and trembling we serve the Majesty on high, and with what pious Raptures our Hearts are transported at thy Goodness. They affift us in our Labours, watch over us in our Beds, encourage us in our Conflicts. crown us in our Conquests, rejoice with them that rejoice, provided they rejoice in thee, and mourn with them that mourn, when their Sorrows are for thy Sake.

O how vigilent is their Care! O how fervent their affections! and all this for the magnifying that inestimable Love, wherewith thou hast vouchsafed to love us. For they love whom thou lovest, keep them whom thou keepest, and for-

fake them whom thou forfakeft. They love not the wicked Psal 5. 5, 6. because thou batest all the workers of iniquity, and abborest all them that freak lies. When we do well the Angels rejoice, and the Devils are grieved : When we go aftray we bring Joy to Devils, and defraud the Angels of that Joy we owe to them. Luke 15. 7, 10. For there is Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, and Triumph in Hell over one righteous Man that relapfeth into Sin, Do thou therefore, gracious Father, enlarge thy Angels Joy; and furnish Matter for it daily more and more, that thou mayst be glorified in our Obedience, and we may be brought with them into thy one Fold, to give thanks for ever to thy holy Name, O Almighty Maker of Angels and Men,

These Benefits I gratefully commemorate, and admire the Greatness of that Love which gave thy holy Angels for ministring Spirits to us. Thou haft given all things under Heaven for our Use and Service, as if thou thoughtest all this too little thou hast given us the Inhabitants of Heaven itfelf, for the same gracious Purposes. Let thy Angels, O Lord, Praise thee; let all thy Works render Thanks unto thee, and let thy Saints for ever bless thee for this mighty Favour. O God, our Glory, how hast thou honoured, how hast thou eariched: how highly haft thou exalted and enobled us with thy manifold and marvelous Gift:! Pial 8. 9. 5. 4. Job 7. 17. How excellent, how wonderful is thy Name, O Lord, in all the world; thou

thou that baft fet not only thine, but our Glory above the Heavens! Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of bim, or the son of Man, that thou should'st fet thy Heart upon him? Thus hast thou eminently verified thy own Word, Prov 8. 31. that thy delight is with the Children of Men. Job 5. 6. But is not Man Corruption, and the Son of Man a Worm? Pfal 36. 6. Is not every Man living altogether Vanity? Job 14. 3. Yet dost thou by a most astonishing Condescension, open thine Eyes upon such a one as this, and bring him into Judgment with thee.

CHAP. XIII.

The Methods of God's Grace in our Santtification and Salvation.

Each me, thou unfathomable Abis, thou Wildom, by which the World was framed. Ifai 40. 18. which baft weighed the mountains in scales, and hanged the vast Globe of the Earth in a Balance; weigh up, I beseech thee, this heavy Mass of Body by thy invisible Power, and raise it nearer to thyfelf, that I may difcern and know, how wonderful thou art in all the World. O Light, antecedent to, and productive of all other Light, whole Brightness shined alone on the everlasting Hills, and to whom all things lay naked and open, even before they were made; whole Purity abhors the least Blemish; What Pleasure canft

eanst thou take in Man? 2 Cor. 6. 14. What Fellowship can Light so clear, have with Darkness so gross? Or where is it, that thou hast prepared a Sanctuary in me, fit for so glorious and holy a Majesty to enter, and dwell, and take delight therein? The Spirits, by whose fanctifying Graces all Things are cleansed, which cannot be seen by any, much less be possessed by any, but the pure in beart, will not certainly lodge in any but clean Habitations.

And is it possible to find in Man a Place fit to receive thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who indeed, but he, whose very Effence is Purity? For that which is unclean itfelf cannot cleanse any other thing, And this was Exod, 19, 20, especially fignified to our Forefathers the Jews in the Law given from a Mountain burning with Fire, and out of a Cloud and thick Darkness, by which it was ordained, that Levit, 22, wholeever was touched by a Perlon under legal Uncleanness, should be reputed from that Contact unclean, And fuch alas ! are we all Pfal, 51, 5, even the very best of us polluted, conceiv'd and born in Corruption, and carrying the Marks of our Impurity fo visible, fo foul, that it is to no purpose to attempt the concealing our Blemishes from thy all-seeing Eyes, Unless thou therefore, who alone art pure, vouchfafe to fanctify us, we never can be clean, And this Merey thou dost vouchsafe to these among the Sons of Men, in whom thou condescendent to dwell; Ephel Ephel 1. 4. these by the unsearchable Secrets of thy Judgments, (always just, tho' to us unknown) Rom 8. 30. thou hast, without any Desert of theirs, predestinated before the World, call'd and chosen them out of the World, justified in the World, John 17. 6. and wilt exalt and glorify them when the World shall be nomore. But this Mercy thou dost not extend to all indifferently, but with most wise Discrimination; that the Wisdom of this World may see it, and consume a-

way with Envy and Aftonishment.

When I reflect on these thy Dispensations, A. mazement seizes me; and the profound mysteriousMethod of thy Wildom and Knowledge fill'd with wonder at Judgments too dark and vast for me to take a distinct View of. For to what else can we ascribe the distinct Fates of the same Sort of Creatures, and, that the Almighty Potter Rom 9. 21. should of the same lump make some vaffels to bonour, and others to everlafting Dishonour and Shame? 2Tim 2.21. Those therefore which thy Love made choice of, Ephel 5. 26. to be an holy Temple for thy Majesty, thou cleansest with thy Spirit, Pfal 147. 4. and fanctifiest with the washing water of thy word, whose Names and Numbers are exactly known to thee; Phil 4. 3. who countest the Number of the stars, and callest them all by their names: Luke 10. 20. Thefe happy Men are written in the book of life, 1Pet 1. 5. Rom 8, 28, and so preserved by thy Power thro' faith unto salvation, that all things, even their Faults Faults and Frailties work together for good to them. Pial 37. 24. 34. 20. though they fall, they shall not utterly be cast down, because thou upholdest them with thy band. thou keepest all their bones, to that not one of them are broken. But dismaland most dreadful is the End of Sinners; of such as thou, before ever the World was made, didft (in thy infinite Wildom, to which the most remote Futurities are ever present) foresee, would deferve to be reprobated by thy just, though to us fecret, Judgment; whose Names and Crimes are likewise known to thee, who tellest the Sands of the Sea, and foundest the great Deep, These, for their manifold and obstinate Offences, thou Pial, 81, 11, 12, givest up to their own bearts lufts, and lettest them follow their own imaginations. And when they are thus permitted to perish in their Folly, all Things work together for their Hurt, and the very Prov. 28, 9, prayer of the wicked is turned into fin, Insomuch, that what promising Appearances foever they may make, yet all at laft is blasted, and comes to nothing: and even such as feem to have fet their Nest in the Stars, are brought down, and cast out as dung upon the Face of the Earth.

Great and marvellous are these thy Counsels, O most worthy Judge eternal, who sittest in the Psal, 9, 4, 8, throne of equity, and bringest to pass things deep and unsearchable. And well may these strike Terror through Job 5, 9, every Part of me, since Man, during this mortal State, cannot attain

Temptation and Danger, that he may accomplish his Warfare with the greater Circumspection, serve thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of his Life with fear, and rejoice unto thee with revernce, That his Obedience may be preserved by Awe, and his Joy tempered with Humility and Trembling; that he who girdeth on his armour, should not boast himself, as he that putteth it off: nor any Flesh glory in thy Presence; but rather fear and humble itself before thy Majesty, when all are kept in this profitable Ignorance of what may befal them in their latter End; and cannot make a Judgment of thy Love or Hatred, or sing Songs of Triumph to their Souls, till all the Hazards of the Fight be over,

How many have our Eyes seen, how many more have we heard of, (which yet I never see, or hear, or recollect, without great Impression) who have been long renowned for conspicuous Patterns of heroick Virtue, and such as seem'd, if any could do so absolutely, to have made their ealling and eletion sure? and yet upon some trying Emergency, even these Men have been vanquished and ensnar'd, and so entirely lost, not only to the Practice, but by Degrees, to the very Principles of Goodness, as to wallow and be hardned past all feeling in the most enormous and scandalous Debaucheries! Rev, 12. Such are the stars of beaven, struck down to the earth, with a Sweep of the Dragon's Tail. How many on the other

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hand

hand (which sustains me with Comfort) who have lain grovelling in Dust and Filth, profligate and ignorant, as well as averse to all Goodness yet even these abandoned Wretches thou hast wonderfully raised, when they seem'd to be just sinking into Hell. Thus may we frequently observe the living die unexpectedly, and the dead in Trespasses and Sins, as much to our Surprize, raised to a Life of Righteousness and Hope: Matt 8. 12. Light clouded over with Darkness, and Darkness breaking forth into marvellous Light. Publicans and Harlots seizing Heaven by Violence, and the Children of the Kingdom cast into utter Darkness.

And whence all this, but because they ascended into the Mountain of Pride, into which the first Pattern of Disobedience went up an Angel, but came down a Devil? Whereas the meek and humble are the Persons chosen and called, sanctified and built up a meet Habitation for the Majesty of the Great God, through the Spirit of his Grace. With these thou enjoyest holy and chaste Delights; dwelling in their Hearts by thy Presence, and making them thy Temple, which is the highest Honour our human Nature is capable of.

For this Soul of ours, which thou hast created by thy Word, though not of thy own Substance; nor yet of any elementary Matter, but out of Nothing; this rational, intellectual, and spiritual Being; ever living, and ever in Motion, (upon which which thon hast impressed thy Likeness, and conlectated it to thyself by the Laver of Regeneration) is put into a Capacity of receiving thy Divine Majesty; and so contrived, as to be filled with thee, and nothing else but thee. When it is in Possession of thee, its Desires are satisfied, and nothing besides remains an Object of its Wishes. But while it continues to desire any external Object, it manifestly betrays the Want of thee within; because, when thou art there, it seeks for nothing

beyond thee.

For fince thou art the supreme and universal Good, in thee possessing all Things it cannot want any thing that is Good. but if it do not defire that which is the Sum of all Good, some other Good will necessarily be sought after, because it hath not yet attained to all, nor yet to the chief Good, and aims at the Possession of the Creature rather than the Creator. And so long as the Creature is the Object of his Desires, those Desires are never to be latisfied; for fome fresh thing is ever presenting itself, and the Soul still remains empty and disconted, because out of its Element, and destitute of its proper Happiness. For nothing is so, but the utmost Perfection it is qualified for, and fuch alone is the bleffed Original, after whose Image it was made at first. Now thou art pleas'd thus to communicate thyfelf only to fuch, who defire nothing but thee. Such thou makeft holy, as thou art holy, pure, and worthy of thee; fuch esteemest thy Friends, who counting all Things

but as Dross and Dung, propose no other End,

no other Bliss, but to gain thee alone.

And this is the Blessedness which thy Mercy hath bestowed upon Man. This is thy Honour with which thou hast distinguished thy favourite Creature, and exalted him far above the rest of the Works of thy Hands. And now, O Lord, at length I have found out the Place where the Great, the Good, the Mighty God is pleased to dwell; even in that Soul which thou hast formed into a Resemblance of thy own Excellencies; which seeks, and loves, and longs for thee alone; but not in that, which divides its Affections, and either loves thee and desires thee not, or loves and longs for other Things besides thee.

CHAP. XIV.

We are not to conceive God to be a sensible Object.

Have gone astray like a Sheep that was lost, seeking thee with great Anxiety without, when yet thou art within, and dwellest in my Soul, if it desire thy Presence. I wander about the Villages and Streets of this World, enquiring for thee every where, and found thee not; because I expected to meet that Abroad which all the while I had at home. I sent my Messengers into all Quarters, and charged my bodily Senses to make strict search, and bring back a true Report, but

but all to no purpose because I took a wrongMethod, and employ'd those who were not qualified for the Discovery: This Error I now perceive, because thou hast Enlightened and shewed me the right way; for, though thou are within me, yet none of these Centinals could give any Ac-

count how thou camest thither.

My Eyes declare, if God have no Colour, he came not in at those Doors; my Ears, if he made no Noise, he did not pass this Way; My Nose, if he did not affect the Smell, he entred not by me: My Palate, if he have no Taste, he could not enter here: My Touch, if he be not a bodily Substance, I can give no account of him. These Qualities then do not belong to Thee, my God, because I am not conscious of any such Impresfions upon thy Approach. For thou hast not the Form of a Body, nor the Whiteness of Light, nor the sparkling of precious Stones, nor the Harmony of Musick, nor the Fragrancy of Flowers, or Ointments, or Spices, nor the delicious Taste of Honey, nor the Charms of those things that are pleasant to the Touch, nor any other Qualities by which our Senses are entertained. When I feek after God, I pursue a Happiness very different from all these; For, to suppose him such a Being, as even Brutes are capable of feeling with the Organs of Sense, were to think most unworthily of him. And yet I cannot but acknowledge, that in God I expect to find a certan Light above all other Light, too bright for mortal Eyes to behold

loves and longs after.

And too late it was, that I fet my Heart upon thee, O my beloved, whose Beauty was from everlafting, and yet is always new and blooming. Too long did I pursue thee in vain, while runing after the beauteous Creatures thou hast made and think ing there to find thee. Thou wast with me, but I was not with Thee; and those things kept me at a Distance from thee, which yet could not subfift except in and by thee. I asked the Earth, if it was my God, and it answered No; and all that it contains unanimously agreed in the same Confestion. I asked the Sea, the great Depths, and all the vast and strange variety of Creatures living and engendered in those watry Regions: they reply'd. We are not thy God, look for bim above us: I enquired of the Firmament, and the Air with all its Inhabitants replied, that Anaximenes was quite mistaken: So did the Sun, and Moon, and Stars declare They were not God. Then I desired the Object of my Senses, to inform me somewhat of that God, which they all difclaimed

elaimed all pretence of being taken for. They all cried out aloud, it is be that made us. At last I reforted to the Globe of the World, but there again the Answer was, I am not God, but I am by bim; the being robom you feek in me is he that made me. And you look much too low, for he who made and governs me is much more excellent, and

feated far above me.

Now by enquiring of the feveral Creatures, I mean by an attentive Confideration of their respective Natures and Conditions: And by their answers, that evidence of their being created by God, which is the plain refult of fuch a Confideration, For most agreeable to the Experience of every wife and fober Person is that of the Rom I. 21. Apostle, that the Invisible things of God are clearly seen from the Creation of the world, being understood by the things that were made.

After confulting thus the Creatures abroad, I came home at last, descended into myself, and asked, What art thou? The Reply made me was, A Rational and Mortal Man. Then I begun to examine what and from whence this fort of Animal should be, and presently reflected, Whence could it possibly be but from thee? It is thou my God, Psal 100, 2. that hast made me, and not I myfelf. But still, who art Thou? Thou art He, by whom I live; He by whom all things live; Thou art the true God, the only Omnipotent, and Eternal, and Incomprehenfible, and Infinite. Ever living, and nothing dies in Thee, for thou Ifai.

Monderful in the Eyes of the Angels, Inexpressible; Unsearchable, and of Perfection so great as wants a Name. Strong and Powerfull, and greatly to be seared, without Beginning and without End; Thy self the Beginning and the End of all things. Existing before Time was, Governor and Lord of all that thou hast made; whose Causes all are fixed in thee, and the Effect subsist in such manner and to such a Term, as thy immutable Wisdom sees fit.

Tell then thy Servant, who defires to know, Whence could Man take his Original, but from Thee? Could any of us give Life and Being to himsels? Nay, was it possible for any other to give him either, but for Thee alone? Art not thou the first and supreme Being, from whom all else receive their Being? Whatever is, is certainly from Thee, for nothing is without thee. Thou art the fountain of Life: Whatever lives, by Thee it lives ; for nothing can live without Thee, Thou hast made all Things, and can I then doubt who made me? Thou certainly art my Maker, and I thy Workmanship, Thanks be to my God, by whom I and all things subfift and live, for my Creation. Thanks to this skilful Artificer, whose Hands made and fashioned me, for creating me a Man. thanks to that Light, which difcovered itself to Me, and Me to myself. For in finding and knowing myself, I find and know thee : and by the Communication of thy Light it it is that I know thee. thanks therefore, O my God, all thanks and Praise be to thee, for thus enlightning me dand on asvestl reduen medwe

But how can I pretend to fay, I know thee? Art not thou God Infinite Incomprehenfible, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, 1Tim 1. 17. who only hast immortality, and dwelest in light which cannot be approached unto, whom no Man bath feen, or can fee? a God that hidest thyself from mortal Eyes? And who can know what he hath never feen? The Herald, fent to prepare the way for thy Truth, proclaimed, John 1. 18. No Man bath feen God at any time; and that Truth itself declared, Matth 11. 27. No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any Man the Father but the Son. Thus the Lord is faid to be high above all Heavens, and such as even the Angels (firictly speaking) do rather admire than behold: John 3. 13. This is the Heaven to which none hath ascended up, but he that came down from Heaven: Thus the Father is known to none but the son and the Spirit proceeding from both; and the Son to none but the Father and the same spirit common to them both: The holy and wonderful Trinity does then exceed all comprehenfions but its own; and the very Angels who are continually looking into this glorious Effence, and contemplate it with the most intense desire, yet are not able to express, and conceive, or acquaint themselves throughly with all its most mysterious Perfections, and esvol asid on as I live some

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How is it then that I know the most high God, whom neither Heaven nor Earth contain, whom even Cherubim and Seraphim adore with aftonishment, and veil their faces with their wings before him that fits on the Throne; Isai 6. crying out, Holy, boly, boly, Lord God of bofts, Heaven & Earth are full of thy glory? I know thee not, my God, as thou art in thyfelf, but as thou art in respect to me: Not in thy Essence but thy Operations; and even this knowledge is not from any power of my own, but wholly owing to the guidance of that Light, which thou art pleased to reflect upon me. Thy Glories are understood by thyfelf alone, thy Grace and Goodness manifested to me. And what art thou with respect to me? Pfal 35 3. Tell me, OLord, and fay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation. Hide not thy Facefrom me, least I die: Suffer me to speak to thy Mercy who am but Dust and Ashes. Thou hast made thy Voice to be heard from above, and broken thro' the Deafness of my Heart; thy Light hath shined forth; and thou haft shewed me that thou art my Saviour, and my merciful God, and thus it is that I have faid I know thee.

John 17. 3. Thus have I known thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: How wretched was that Blindness in which liaw thee not! How stupid that Deafness when I heard thee not! How miterable my Condition when I loved thee not! For no Man loves thee who does not see thee, and none can see thee, who does not love thee.

Honour and Praise and Thanksgiving be to the Light of myLife, for thole Manifestations of himfelf which he hath vouchfafed to make to mySoul. Pfal 86. 10. But how is it that theu haft manifested thyself to me? Gen 1. 26 Even by instructing me that thou art my only God and Creator. John 17. 3. The true living God, Almighty, Immortal, Invisible, Eternal, Incomprehensible, Unsearchable, Unchangable Gen 17. 3. Infinite, by whom all Things were made, and the Principles of all subsist. I Tim 1. 17. Job 11.7. Pfal 90. 2. Matt 11. 25. Whose Majesty, as it had no Beginning or Increase, so shall it never have any Diminution or End. John 1. 3. Colof. 1 16. The only God, and Father, Son, and HolyGhoft, Three Persons and one Substance, Author and commonCause of all Things visible and invisible, who by thy mighty Power didft at the Beginning of Time from spiritual and corporeal Substances: the Angels of the former, the Things of this World of the latter Sort; and Man partaking of both Natures confifting of Body and Spirit, by a stupendous Conjunction of Material and immaterial, and all these created out of nothing,

John 14. 26. I know and acknowledge thee, O Father, begotten of none, Thee, O Son begotten of the Father, Thee, O holy Ghost the Comforter, proceeding from both, Three Persons coequal, consubstantial coeternal. This undivided Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, Rom 10. 9, 10. I believe with the Heart unto Righteousness.

and confess with the Mouth unto Salvation.

I confess and acknowledge thee the true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Creator, Saviour, and Redeemer of me, and of all Mankind. John 1. 4, 5. Begotten of the Father before all Worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Heb 1. 3. being of one Substance with the Father and Holy Spirit, by whom all things were made Firmly believing, that thou God only begotten Jesus Christ, by a marvellous Concurrence of the whole Trinity, Matt 1. 21. wast for us Men, and for our salvation, incarnate of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, conceived by the holy Ghost, and so perfect God, was made perfect Man, of a reasonable Soul and

buman Flesh Jubfisting.

John 1. 14. Who, though in regard of thy divine Nature, thou art impassible and immortal, yet, for the unspeakable Love wherewith thou hast loved us, didit by taking our humane into that divine Nature, become subject to Sufferings. and Death. Ephel 2. 4. And thus the same Son of God condescended to die upon the Cross for a Time, that he might deliver us from everlasting Death. 1Peter 2. 24. Thou giver of Light, descendedst into Hell, where our Forefathers sat in Darkness; Matt 28 and the third Day didft rise again from thence a glorious and triumphantConqueror; taking up that bleffed Body of thine, which for our Sins had lain dead in the Grave, and reftored it to Life the third Day according to the

the Scriptures, that thou mightest enthrone it at the right Hand of the Father. Then didst thou lead Captivity captive, Ephel 4, 8, 10, which the Enemy of Mankind had taken Prisoner; and thus, thou very Son of God, with our very Substance, that is, the human Soul and Body deriv'd from thy blessed Virgin Mother, hast ascended up on high, far above all Heavens, Angels, and Principalities, and Powers being made subject to thee; I Pet 3. 22. where now thou fittest at the Right-hand of God in endless overflowing Life, in Light inaccessibl, in that Peace which passeth

all Understanding.

There believe and worship Jesus Christ, very God and very Man; confessing that God, Acts 10. 42. who hath fo highly exalted thee, is thy Father of a truth, and waiting for thy coming in the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead, Matt 16. 26. and to render to every man according to bis works; to the Good, Reward and Rest; the Evil, Grief and Punishment eternal. Rom 2. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. For in that Day shall all men bear thy voice, come forth with thesr own Bodies, John 5. 28, 29. 11. 25. that each may receive at thy Hand according to that he bath done in his body, whether it be good or bad. Thou art our Life, thou art our Refurrection, and in thee we look for a Saviour, 2 Cor 5. Phil 3. 21. Jejus Chrift the Lord, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like nnto his glorious body, according to his mighty workings whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. 1 John

1 John 5. 7. John 14: I know and acknowledge thee, the one true God, holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; of the same Substance and Eternity with the Father and the Son, Matt 3. 16. our Advocate and Comforter; who did descend like a Dove upon the same our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 2. 1 Cor 11. 9, 10, 11. and appeared in fiery Tongues upon the bleffed Apoftles. who halt from the Beginning of the World shed abroad the Gifts of thy Grace upon all the Saints and Chosen of God, and opened the Mouth of the Prophets, that they might reveal the wonders; of his Kingdom; Who with the Father and Son together are worshiped and glorified in all Churches of the Saints. Among whom I also, thy meanest Servant, beg leave to publish thy Praises for the saving Light communicated to my 1 John 2. 20, 27. For thou art the true Soul. Light, the holy Fire of God, to whom all Saints are subject; the Spirit of Truth, who, Rom 8. 8, 9. by thy unction teacheth us all truth; without whose Grace it is impossible to please God: For thou art God of God, and Light proceeding after a mysterious and ineffable manner from the Father of Lights, and from his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. With these thou art coequal and coeternally united in the same Essence, and with them reignest and art glorified by a fingular and most stupendous Union.

Thus do I know thee the One true God, Three in Persons, and One in Essence: Thus do I con-

fels and adore with my whole heart the Maker and Governor of all Things that are in heaven and earth, and under the earth. I know these by that Faith which thou hast inspired into me, for thou art the Light of mine Eyes, the hope of all the Ends of the Earth, the Joy of my youth and the Support of my old Age. Pfal 35. 10. All my bones shall be joyful in thee, and say, Lord, who is like unto thee? Yea, who among the Gods is like unto thee, O Lord, who art not made as they were by Men's Hands, but who thyself didst make the Hands of Men? Pfal, 115, 1, Kings 18, 59, Pfal, 97. 7, The Images of the heathen are filver and gold, and all their Gods are Devils, But it is the Lord that made the heavens. The Lord he is the God, The Lord be is the God, Confounded be all the vain Gods, and let them find no Place in Heaven and Earth, who made neither Heaven nor Earth; but let Heaven and Earth, and all that therein is, for ever glorify and praise thy Name : for thou hast made Heaven and Earth, and all that therein is.

CHAP. XV.

A Confession of our own Vileness, and God's Excellencies.

THO is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in beliness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Too late alas

alas ! it is I am brought to a due Sense and Knowledge of thee, A thick and gloomy Cloud hung too long before my blinded Eyes, through which I was not able to discern the Sun of Righteousness, and Light of Truth, I was muffled up in Darkness, a Child of Darkness, and did not only endure, but love my Darkness; because as yet in Ignorance of the Truth. I was blind and fond of my Misery, and every Day bewilder'd more and more in Darkness that might be felt. And what kind Friend was He that took me by the Hand to draw me out of this Shadow of Death? Who so compassionate a Guide to this blind Wretch, to feek me when I fought not Him, to call me when I never cryed for Help, never complained, nay, never felt my calamitous and lost Condition? 2 Cor I. 3. This can be none but Thou, my God. the Father of Mercies and God of all Comfort. No Bowels less enlarged than Thine could shew such tender Pity and Affection. Bleffed therefore be thy Name, for ever bleffed be thy Love, Isai 65 1. which was found of a miserable Creature, who fought thee not, and asked for him that enquired not after thee,

In this spiritual, as heretofore in the natural Creation, thy powerful Voice said, Gen 1. 3. Let there be Light, and there was Light. The gross Night which swam before my Eyes dissolved in an Instant. I felt it scatter, and descried the dawning Day, and heard the powerful Command, and full of thankful Wonder cried out, Thou verify

art my God, which baft brought me out of darkness and the fladow of death, into thy marvellous hight. Thou spakest the Word and behold I see. Then did I first discover the Horrors of my former Darkness, the dismal Abys in which I lay, and trembled at the Reflection. O wretched State ! O most uncomfortable Blindness, which all the Light of Heaven did not penetrate! O deplorable Ignorance, which knew not him who made me, preserves me, is always present with me, always inseparably in me, Thanks to my God, for bringing me to a Sight of that, which I must needs have feen before, had not my Corruption been so opposite to thy Purity. But then, alas ! we were in direct Contrariety, Thou Light, I Darkness; and discern thee I could not, till thou dartedst thyself into my Soul: for there is no Light besides, none without thee.

Such is my Meanness and Misery considered in itself; but I am yet much more vile and despicable in my own Sight, when from such Restlections I raise my Soul to contemplate thy unchangeable Majesty, O Lord God most holy, God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, at whose Presence the Hosts of Angels tremble Dominions and Thrones sall down and adore, of whose Power and Wisdom there is no End, no Measure; who hast laid the Foundations of the World upon nothing, and gathered the Waters of the Sea together as an Heap; the most mighty God of the Spirits of all Flesh; at whose Word and Presence

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Presence the Heavens and the Earth quake, and to whose Beck every Element pays a ready Obedience. Even so, blessed God, be thou for ever worshipped, obeyed, and gloristed by thy whole

Creation, Amen.

In Company with these, I thy unworthy Servant do bow the Neck of my Heart by Faith, and proftrate myfelf before the Footfool of thy Majesty, with humble Gratitude for all thy Mercies; but more especially for that spiritual Light and Guidance, which thou hast been pleased to vouchfafe unto me. By thee, O true Light, who lightest every mon that cometh into the world, I see and am thankful. I feel thy bright Beams descending from above into my Soul, cherishing and warming my inwardParts, and making glad all my Bones, Finish, I beseech thee, the good Work already begun in me. Increase thy blessed Gift, and let the Brightness of thy illuminating Grace diffuse itself plentifully through every Power and Faculty of my Mind.

What Glowing in my Breast is this I feel? What Light that darts its Rays into my Soul? O Fire that never art quenched, kindle my Affections! O Sun of Righteousness, that never settess, never art clouded, shine in my Heart! How sweet is thy Warmth! How secret and pleasant thy chearful Light! O let me ever be instamed with thy divine, thy delightful Beams! Wretched are they that burn with impure Fires; Wretched, that walk by any other Light, and remain

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remain destitute of thine: Wretched those blind Eyes which do not, wretched those dim Eyes which cannot, wretched those wilful Eyes which wink hard, and will not see the Truth. Wretched they, who do not turn away their Eyes from beholding Vanity; for being long habituated to Darkness, disables such from bearing the Brightne's of thy Light, or valuing as they ought the Bleffing of thy chearing Influences. They feel, and approve, and dote upon Darkness; and finking every Day into groffer Degrees of Ignorance, know not upon what flippery Ground they stand, nor the dangerous Precipices into which they are falling. O miserable Wretches, who are not fensible of the Worth of what they lose! And yet more milerable those hardned Souls, who are sensible of their Loss and Ruin, but nevertheless stumble and fall with Eyes broad open, and go down quick into Hell.

O Heavenly Lustre! which discoverest thyself only unto unblemish'd Eyes and clean Hearts! Matt 5, 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Cleanse me throughly, thou sanctifying Spirit; take out the Beams and Motes from my Eyes, that I may be qualified steadily to behold thy Divine Beauties. Command the Scales of my old Errors to fall off, which like thick Mists dance before my deluded Sight, and piecerd them through with thy resplendent Beams, Pial 36. 9. that in Light I may see Light. Praised be my God, the Fountain of Light; for, whereas I was for.

merly blind, now I fee: Strenthen then I befeech thee, and diffuse this Grace yet more plentifully in my Soul. Pfal 119. 18. Open thou my eyes, that I may discern the wondrous things of thy Law. Thanks for the Prospect I already have of thy stupendous Perfections, which though as yet but distant, dark and through a glass, is yet such as makes me vehemently desire a nearer View, and one that may be Face to Face. O when shall that Day of Joy and Triumph come, which shall introduce me into the secret Place of thy Dwelling, the constant bright Abode of thy majestick Presence, that I may satisfy my largest Wishes, and find a fresh and never-ceasing Pleasure, in still desiring what I enjoy, and enjoying what I defire?

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The Soul's earnest Longings after future Happiness.

I KE as the heart panteth for the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. O Fountain of living Water, when shall approach thee; when I have traveled through this dry and desolate Wilderness, in which there is no way; that my Soul may be satisfied with the Plente-ousness of thy Mercy? Behold, O Lord I thirst; thou art the Well of Life, O quench my Thirst, yea, after the living God do I thirst. O suffer me

to drink of thy Pleasures; and hasten that Day of Praise and Thanksgiving; Psal 118, 22, that day which thou, O Lord, haft made, that thy Servante may rejoice and be glad in it. O glorious Day 1 O everlasting Morning! Whose Sun never declines, in which I shall hear that most transporting Sentence Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Job 5. 9. Into that Joy, where are things great and unfearchable, yea, marvelous things without number, A Joy without Conclusion, without Interruption, without Allay ; where we shall meet with all we can wish, and reft secure from all we can fear ; free from the Enemies Affaults. from the Tempter's feducing Infinuations; full of Security and Reft, and Peace, bleffed with the ravishing Vision of the Deity for ever : fuch is the Joy of thy Lord thy God.

comprehensive; above which, in comparison of which, beside which, there is no Joy. When shall I enter into thee, and behold my God that dwelleth in thee? What is it that detains me from him whom my Soul loveth? Howlong shall it be said unto my eager Heart, Wait, wait patiently: And now; O Lord, what do I wish and wait for? Phil 3 21. Surely it is for Thee, my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who will change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body: Surely it is for my Lord's coming to the Marriage, that he may admit me into the Bride-chamber. Matt 25, Come quickly, Lord, and do not

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tarry. Come, Lord Jesus, and visit us in Peace and Favour. Come and unlock our Prison Doors that thy released may rejoice before thee with a spersect Heart. Pial 18. 19. Come thou desire of all nations, shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole. Come, my Light, my Redeemer, and set my Soul at Liberty, that Imay give Thanks unto thy holy Name. How long must I continue to be tossed upon the Waves of this mortal Life, crying unto the, O Lord, and thon hearest not it has down thine Ear I beseech thee, and listen when I call out of the Deep, and bring me to the Haven of everlasting Bliss.

110 O happy Souls, who are delivered from the Perils of this Sea, and got fafe to Shore; who have reach'd their native Country, and exchanged their Prison for a Pallace! Happy those Combatants; who have received that Crown of Glory, which they endured the Fight of various Afflictions to obtain, and are translated from short Tribulations to endless Triumphs ! Happy beyond all Exprest fion, who have put of their Load of Frailty and Suffering, who are in quiet Possession of the Gloty which fadeth not away, and cloathed with Majetty and Honour! O bleffed State, O Kingdom evetlasting, where the Souls of Saints are in Peace and Felicity, Isai 35. 10. where eternal rejoicing is upon every bead, and forrow and fighing flee away. Where the Saints reign with Thee their beloved Lord, Pial 104: 2 , and deck themselves with light as with a garment. O Kingdom

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crown of all thy faithful Servants makest them Psal 21.7. Phil 4.7. glad with the joy of thy Countenance, and that peace which passet all understanding. Their Joy knows no Bounds, their Mirth no Sorrow, their Health no Pain, their Light no Intervals of Darkness, their Life hath no Death, their Happiness is universal, without the least Mixture of Evil. Their Youth is ever fresh and gay, their Beauty always blooming their Love ever fervent, their Pleasures have no Abatement; For thou, O God, art their All in all,

their Sole, their Chief, their perfect Good.

But the more we admire the Happiness of them who are exalted to this secure and blissful State already, the greater Cause have we to bewail our own Mifery, who are still exposed to all the Storms and Shipwrecks of a tempeltuous and troubled Sea: For we alas! can only hope the best, but are not fure that we shall ever make the Port of everlatting Life and Salvation. For our Life is a State of Exile and Captivity, our End unknown, our Fate wrapp'd up in the Clouds of a dark Futurity. We he at the Mercy of Winds and Waves, and cast many a weary and longing Look to the Land of our Hope and Reft. But, O thou Stay of our Souls, our Refuge and Strength, whose Light like the Sailors Star, shines through the thick Clouds that hang over our Heads; Steer we beleech thee, this floating Veffel with the Helm of thy Crois, left the Deep swallow us up. thefe! Draw us out of

these Surges to thyself our only Comfort, whom now our weeping Eyes can but just difeern, flanding afar off, like a Dawn of the Morning Star. to conduct and receive us to the wish'd-for Regions of Light. We are thy redeemed, and as fuch ery unto thee; Captives indeed at present, but such as thou hast ransomed with thy most precious Blood. Pial 95. 5. Hear us, O God of our Salvation, thou that art the Hopes of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad fea. Thou flandest upon the Shore and feest our Dangers, and how our Veffel works in the Storm: O fave us for thy Name's fake, and so direct our Course, that we may happily decline those Rocks on every Side, which if we strike upon we are dash'd to Pieces. Thou knowest the Value of our Cargoe, and the Difficulties of the Voyage, Save Master or we perish.

This is our distressed Condition at present, but when thou hast brought us whom to thyself, the Fountain of Wisdom and Father of Lights, such Complaints and all Occasions for them shall cease. Then in thy Light shall we see Light, not such as our corporeal Eyes are now bless'd with, but Light unbodied, incorruptible, unquenchable, uncreated, the inaccessible, the true, the divine Light; that which enlightens Angels, and is the Privilege and Joy of Saints, even the Source of Light and Life, even thee, my Lord and my God. 1. Cor. 13. 12 For thou art the Light, in whose light we shall see light; that is, behold thee in and

in and by thyself, and Face to Face. Which what elle can it import, but, as thy bleffed Apostle hath very justly explained it, knowing as we are known; being let into a distinct View and Knowledge of thy Truth and Glory? So that to fe thy face is in effect to know the Power of the Father, the Wildom of the Son, the Clemency and Goodness of the Holy Ghost, and the mysterious adorable Union of all three in one undivided Effence. And thus to see the living God is the most exalted Happiness, the Honour and Reward of bleffed Spirits, the Crown of Glory and eternal Blife, the Beauty of Peace, the Paradife of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and that Fulness of Joy which no finite Mind can comprehend. For this is the utmost Blessedness of glorified Man, to see him who made Heaven and Earth, the infinitely good Being, which created, and faved, and brought him to Bliss and Glory with himself. This Sight consists in a clearer Knowledge of him, in loving and admiring, in praifing and Possessing him. For he is the Inheritance of his People, even of the Spirits whom he hath purchased of old. He is their Portion and the Recompence of their Hopes und holy Labours. Gen 15, 1. I am thy exceeding great reward, was his Declaration and Promise to Abraham, and the Promise it was every way worthy the Divine Maker. For great and noble Things fuit the Character of great and noble Persons. Thou indeed, my God, art exalted far above all Gods, and thy Reward is proportionably ampuod l

onably high. For thou art not great, and thy Reward little; but as thou art, so is that, great; for thou art not one thing and thy Reward another; but both the same, and both exceeding great. Thou art the bestower of the Crown, and the Crown itself; the Maker of the Promise, and the Matter of the Promise itself; the Giver and the Gift, the Diadem of Hope bedeck'd with Glory, the Defire and the Joy of thy holy ones. The Sight of Thee is therefore all that Blis and Recompence we can possibly hope for. John 17. 3. This is eternal Life, this thy own Wisdom, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou bast sent. When therefore we shall see Thee, the Only, the True, the Living, the Almighty, Infinite and Incomprehensible Father; and the Only-begotten, Consubstantial and Coeternal Son, whom thou sentest into the World for our Salvation, by the Power of the Holy Ghost: When we shall see those Three Persons in the Unity of the Spirit One only Divine Essence, besides whom there is no God; then shall we actually possels what we now so solicitously labour after, even that everlasting Life and Glory, which thou hast prepared for them that love Thee, and the Portion of them that feek thy Face continually.

And Thou. O Lord my God, who hast formed me and preserved me from my Mother's Womb, suffer me not I beseech thee, to be diverted from this One, and distracted in the Pursuit of Many Objects; but call in my wandring

Thoughts

Thoughts scattered upon Things without, and let me stand collected in myself, and from myself, rise up and fix on Thee alone; that my Heart may always be in a Condition of faying with the Pfalmift, Thou haft faid, Seek ye my Face ; thy Face Lord, will I feek : Even the Face of the Lord of Host, in the Vision whereof the everlasting Life and Glory of bleffed Spirits in Heaven confift. Let my Heart therefore rejoice, that it may fear thy Name. Pfal 105. 4. Yea, Let the Heart of them rejoice that feek the Lord. But if the Heart of them that feek him only be affected with fo fensible a Joy, how ravishing and intense must theirs needs be, who do not only feek but find him? I will therefore feek thy Face constantly, zealously, instantly, that so at length Psal 118. 19, 20. the gate of righteousness may be open'd, and I may go into the Joy of my Lord, this is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it.

CHAP. XVII.

A concluding Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Three, Coeternal and Coequal Persons, and One true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Thou that alone inhabitest Eternity, and that Light to which no Mortal can approach; that hast sounded the Earth by thy Power, and rulest all the Kingdoms of it by thy Wisdom; Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God

God of Saboth! Strong and Terrible, merciful and just, worthy to be Praised, admired, and lowed above all things, by every Creature capable of paying thee this Tribute: Power, Wisdom and Goodness, One undivided Trinity, look down with Pity, and give Ear to the Calling of thy poor Servant, who humbly begs Admission into the gates of Righteoutness, that he may render

due Thanks to thy glorious Name.

Behold, great Master of the House a needy Beggar knocking at the Door of the Mercy: O let him by his own Experience prove the Truth of that gracious Promise, Mate 7. 7. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For what is knocking, if the inward Groans, the Sounding of my Bowels, the vehement Defires, the deleful Lamentawith which my Heart now feeks thee, do not deferve that Name? Nor can any of the le most inward Griefs be loft upon an All-feeing God; for thou observest my most secret Thoughts, and my Heaviness is not hid from Thee, Pial 27. Turn not then thy Face any longer from me, nor cast away thy fervant in displeasure. Hear O Father of Mercies, hear the loud Complaints of thy defolate Child, and firetch out thy Hand to help me. Draw me out of the Mire of Milery and Oortuption, and fave me from the deep Waters; the Overflowings of Ungodliness, that I fink nors My Danger and my Calamity thou canft not but fee, and shall I be suffered to perish, will Merog ittelf

itself look on? Call up thy Bowels thy tender and unspeakable Affection, of which I have already had so many Instances: Let these commiserate my present Distress, and work out for me a mighty Deliverance: that I may be conducted fafe to Thee, my God, and fee the Riches of thy Kingdom and the Beauties of thy glorious Presence; and fing Praises incessantly to thy Name, Psal 72. 18. O Lord. who doft wonderous things. Thou retresheft my Soul with glad Remembrances of thy Goodness, and hast enlightned my younger Years with the brightness of thy Truth; Pfal 71. 103. 5. Forfake me not, I befeech thee, in my old Age and gray Hairs; but make my feeble Body rejoice and renew my Youth as an Eagle, and in thy due time command these dry Bones to live again by a bleffed Refurrection to immortal Life and Glory.

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inche look on the Call op the Bowelsthy, tends to and an corporately Affolion, of a bleft I have at eadyear had formery latheraces; Les cheft parent character ner pretent Diffiele, and was one for over a method and to Deliverance is the Tourist in adult of the construction of Thering Codand fe the Letter of the Logaritation suffering the character of the Hickory Business and an angthred chardend in the Name Platers 18, see O Lord, who had consider out a light Thou concilience ed my seed with glad Remembrances of the Goodfeel and half chiligathen my younger, Years all with the neglection of and a Fielga. 103. 5. 10 Forming negation of the state of the state of and gray blairs, but mally made, his Body resorces el and recess inv Youth or so Fight and in thy he due time to pareind their it discerta been exerted as de Leavel . Clement of enthances housely ve

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MANUAL

BOOK IV

The PREFACE.

HE Multitude and vast Variety of enflaving Objects with which in this Life we are every where befet, divert our Thoughts, and cool our Love of Heaven. It is therefore necessary to fortify and rouze ourselves, that we may wake out of our deluding Dream. and when we feel our Souls rove and fall off, we may be able to bring them speedily to God, our true and chief Good, This Consideration, and my fervent Love of my God, not any rash and presumtuous Conceitof my own Abilities, put me upon compiling this little Book, that fo I might have some pious Reflections always about me, collected from the choicest Sayings of Holy Fathers; the fervent reading whereof may warm me afresh with Divine Love, whenever I shall feel that holy Fire begin to languish in my Heart. Assist me therefore O my God, in this well intended Undertaking

dertaking; for thee even thee, I feek, and love, and praise, and adore, with Heart, and Mouth,

and every Faculty I have.

My Mind entirely dedicates itself to thee, gasps and pants after thee, and covets no other Blifs than the Sight of her beloved; taltes no other Pleasure but that which refults from speaking, hearing, writing, conferring, and perpetually dwelling upon the Meditation of thee and thy Glory, expecting from these sweet Remembrances some Refreshment and inward Calm, in the midst of a tempestuous World. To thee therefore, O Joy and Defire of my Heart; I cry aloud, and from the Bostom of my Heart. I call within because I know thee there; for were not thou in me, I should not be at all; and were not I in thee, thou wouldest not be in me: But thou art in me, when ever in my Memory; from thence I know thee, and there I find thee, when I call to mind, and delight myself in recounting thy glorious Perfections, from, and by, and in whom all Things sublist.

CHAP. I.

The Excellencies, of the Divine Essence.
Isai 6. 3. Heb 1. 3.

Hajefly of thy Glory: Thou sustainest all Things, and yet seelest no Burden, fillest all, and yet are circumscribed by none. John 5.7. Always

ways in Action, and yet always in Rest, seeking and gatherest, but wantest not; Exod. 20. 5. lovest without Passion, art jealous with Pain; Jerem 26. 3. 18. 7. repentest without Remorse, art angry without Commotion; alterest thy Measures, but not thy Mind, recoverest what thou hadst never lost, rejoicing in Gain and yet never poor, expecting thy own with Luke 15. Usury, and yet never covetous; bountiful, and paying to them to whom thou art not indebted, and placing those good Actions to account. which are thy due, that by a marvellous Condescension, thou mayst become thy faithful Servants Debtor.

For Pfal. 79. 5. Matt. 25. 27. 1 Cor. 4 7. who hath any thing which is not thine? Thou payest and owest not, thou remittest thy Dues and losest nothing. Thou art in every Place, Prov. 15. 3. 29. and in each entire: thou art to be perceived, but not with Eyes of Flesh; absent from none, yet far from the Imaginations of the ungodly; but still not absent even from them, for where thou art not by thy Grace, thou art present by thy Observation and Vengeance. We follow thee, and yet thou removest not, and what we pursue we are not able to attain: For thou possesses, fillest comprehendest and sustainest all things by thy wonderful Presence and Power.

Ifa. 54. 13, Job 33, 14, 15, 16, Thou teacheff the Hearts of the faithful without the Help of articulate Sounds: art not extended with Space nor changed by Time, nor nearer or more di-

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stant by Motion; but inhabitest the Light, towhich no Mortal can approach, which none 1. Tim, 6, 16, hath seen or can see, Always at rest in thyself, and yet travelling through the Universe, and each Part of it, For thou art so entirely one, as not to be divided; but art every where all in all.

never poor, expeding the own with Lake as, it is to an in the last it is to a continue of the continue of the

The inexpressible Persection of the Divine Knowledge.

Hough the whole World were filled with Volumes on that Subject, yet could they not all declare the Excellence of thy immense Knowledge; for this is above the Power of Pen? or Tongues to express or finite Minds to comprehend. Thou art the Source of divine Light, transcendently great and good, and therefore exceeding all Quantity and Quality. With thee to will is to do, and to intend is to be able to perform. By the Almighry Efficacy of this Will and lone, it was that thou madest all things out of nothing; and every thing thus made, thou postelsest without Need, governest without Trouble, disposit without Resistance or Intersuption. For neither in Heaven above, nor in Earth nor Hell beneath, is there any thing that can diffurb the peaceful Order of thy Administration

And yet, thou art not the Author of any Evil. for the doing this is what thy Omnipotence extends

tends not to, which can do all things good and great; and therefore thou who canst do every thing, canst yet do nothing to be repented of. Thy Goodness gave us Being, thy Justice punishes our Misdeeds, thy Mercy spares us from the Punishments we deserve. When we say that all things are full of thy Power and Presence, our Meaning is not that they contain thee, but are contained in thee; not that thou fillest them by Parts and Measure, so that each Creature should receive such Proportions of thee as it is capable of, some more, some less; but thou art entire in each of them, and every one of them entirely in thee. For all things are within the Compass and Governance of thy Power, and none can find a way of escaping thy mighty Hand. Whosoever hath not the comfortable Presence of this Goodness and Favour, hath the Terror of thy angry Justice ever present with him.

CHAP. III.

The Thirst of the Soul after God.

B U T as for me, my dearest Lord, let the former of these, I beseech thee, be my Portion: Come in much Mercy down into my Soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely Mansion, I confess, for so glorious a Majesty; but such as thou art sitting up for the Reception of thee, by holy and servent Desires of thy own inspiring.

inspiring. Enter then, and adorn, and make it fuch as thou wilt not difdain to inhabit, fince it is doubly the Work of thy Hands; first by a natural, to Life, and fince by a spiritual and better Creation, to Righteousness and true Holiness : let me wear thee upon my Heart as a Signet, and let nothing ever detace the Impression. Forfake not, I befeech thee, thy Servant that calleth upon thee; for before I called thou preventeds my De. fires, and that I call or feek thee, is from that Grace which first of all sought and called me: And why this, but that so sought I might seek thee again, and so feek as to find thee, and so find as unfeignedly to love and delight in thee? Love I have fought Lo, I have found my God: Lo, I desire to love thee: O increase my Desire, O grant that Request, and Give me thy ownielf, without which, though thou fhouldst give me all that ever thou hast made, yet could not my Defires be fatisfied. Give then thy ownself to thy own Servant, for thy own Servant loveth thee; and if he love thee yet too little, endeavour to supply that Defect, by wishing above all things to love thee more and more. Thou haft my whole Heart, I know no rival Passion, I burn with no other Defire; I delight in the Remembrance of no other Object.

The Power of my Affection is so sensible, that while my Mind is soaring up to thee, it finds it-self in some degree released from this Clog of Flesh that hangs about it. A peaceful Calm composes

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all my Thoughts, the Load of Mortality and Mifery grows lighter, and all the Tumults of worldly Cares and Troubles are hush'd in Silence and profound Tranquility. I feel my Heart glow, my Mind ravished with Extasses of Pleasure, my Memory grows vigorous and strong, my intellectual Powers more clear and bright, and my whole Soul enflamed with eager Love and earnest longings for invisible Joys. O that I had Wings like an Eagle, that my towring Flight may never faulter, never rest, till I had mounted up to the Glories of thy heavenly Habitation, and were filled with the Pleasures of thy beauteous Presence, and taft the Sweets and feaft upon the rich Dainties, which the Citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem perpeatually feed upon. Thou art our Hope, our Salvation and Redemption, and exceeding great Reward; be thou also our Glory and our Joy. Let my Soul ever feek thee, and let me perfift in feeking, till I have found and am in full Poffesfion of thee.

CHAP. IV.

The Milery of them, who do not seek and love God.

POR wretched is that Soul, whose Endeavours and Desires are fixed on any other Object; by a Thirst always Tormenting, but never resreshed, never satisfied. The End of living

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is loft to them who love not God; and he who defires Life for the fake of any thing besides, is nothing, and aims at Vanity and Nothing. He who will not live to thee, he that is wife for any other Purpose, is no better than a Fool. To thee therefore, gracious Lord, I commit, bequeath. devote myself, from whom alone my whole being and Life, and Knowledge is derived; in thee is all my Trust and Confidence, from whom I expect my second and better Life. I defire and love and worship thee, with whom I hope to dwell and reign, and be happy to all Eternity. The Soul which feeks and loves not thee, doats on the World, and is a Slave to Sin; always in Bondage, never at ease, never secure, Let my Soul, gracious Lord; be ever employed in thy Service, my present sojourning tend ever to thee, and my Heart be ever inflamed with the Defire and Love of thee alone.

Let this be my rest, and the Contemplation of it my Joy and Comfort in the Days of my Pilgrimage, Let me be shelter'd under the Shadow of thy Wings, from the Storms of anxious and world!y Cares; and when the Winds blow and the Waves swell, let this be my Harbour and soft Repose. O God, rich in Goodness, and the bountiful Giver of heavenly Delights, sustain my Faintings relieve my Hunger, break the Bonds of my Captivity, heal my Wounds, and repair my Breaches. Behold I stand at the Door and knock, let that tender Mercy, which from on high visit-

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ed us, command the Door to be open'd, that I may go in to thee, and rest in thee, and be refreshed abundantly with thy heavenly Sustenance. For thou art the Bread and the Fountain of Life; thou art the Brightness of everlasting Light; thou art every thing by which those pious Spirits are supported and comforted, who love and live to thee.

tion to my Stal prov Stales to Reston, and my Reston to thy Wood Ak H Din the outward

A Broyer for Groce to tove God above all things.

God, the Light of every Heart that less than Light of every Soul that loves those the Srength of every Mind that feeks theel great me ever to continue feedfast in the holy Love. Pour thytelf into my Heart, and let it overflow and be so entirely filled with thy Pleasures, that there may be no room left for the trifling Vanities here below HI am ashamed and tired of living after the way of the World; the very fight and bearing of transitory Objects in troublesome: Help me my God, against the Infinuations of fuch, and be thou the Joy of my Heart's Take it all to thyfelf, and keep thy continual residence there. The House I confes is fraight; do thou enlarge it : Ruimout, but do that repair it full of Pollutions which might be a Nuitance to Eyes to pure of know and with Crief confess it: But whose Help shall I implore

in cleaning it except thine alone? To thee therefore I cry instantly, begging that thou wilt purge me from all my secret faults and especially keep thy servant from presumptuous fins, that they never get the dominion over me.

enable me, sweet Jesus, I befeech thee, to lay aside the weight of sinful Lusts, and exchange my worldly Desires and Affections for those of thee and Heaven. Let my Body be in constant subjection to my Soul, my Senses to Reason, and my Reason to thy Grace, that so both the outward and the inward Man may be ever obedient, and disposed to do thy Will. Fill my Heart, my Mouth and all my Bones with thy Praise. Enlighten my Understanding, and exalt my Affections, that I may soar upwards to thee; and set me free from those Fetters which saften me down and are an Incumbrance to me, that I may leave all here below, and serve, and six, and dwell upon Thee alone.

triffing of heing after the way of the World; the

Pleafarcs, that there may be no room left for the-

The Happiness of Souls delivered from their ent and integral earthly Prisons. I conclude the financians of such and be thought of the control of the control

A ND happy fure beyond Imagination is that bleft Soul, which makes its escape out of this earthly Prilon, wings its way to Heaven without any Restraint; which sees its dear Lord face to face, and no longer enslaved to the Fear of Death,

Death, triumphs in the Enjoyment of everlasting Glory. Possessing Thee the Object of its Love and long Pursuit, and singing Hymns of neverceasing Praise to the Honour of her King and Redeemer ; satisted with the Plentepusness of thy House, and drunk with the Rivers of thy everflowing Pleasures O happy Company of heavenly Citizens! O glorious Pomp of Souls returning from their toilsome Pilgrimage to the Excellence of the Beauty, and Splendor, and Majesty of thy Courts ! O the ravishing Entertainment of those harmonious Hymns, the Melody of Angels, and sweet Notes of Songs in Consort, of which every Member of the heavenly Choir bears his Part ! No Mixture of Bitter pollutes those holy Joys, no Malice or Wickedness, no Want or Difgrace, no railing or reviling, or angry Disputes. no Fear or Disquiet, no Doubt or Uneafines, or mutual Diffrust, no Force or Discord; but perfect Peace and Love, eternal Praise and Thanksgiving uninterrupted Reft, and Joy exerlasting in the Holy Ghost. My God. how happy should I be to hear that transporting Musick, and those divine Compositions, which publish the Mysteries and Glories of the bleffed Trinity; my God, how much happier and more honoured, if admitted not only to hear, but myfelf to join in Confort with those Sons of God who fing to their Christ and King one of the pleasant Songs of Sian.

O Life, truly worthy that Name; because everlasting, ever blessed. A Life of Joy unpollu-Rr ted

ted with Sufferings or Sorrow, Rest without Labour or Disturbance, Honour without Fear or Envy, Riches without Robbery or Loss, Health without Decay, Plenty without Lack, Happiness without Disasters. Where all good things are enjoyed in perfect Charity, Where God is seen face to face, and the Mind is feasted and fully latisfied with Knowledge, ever seeing and ever defiring to fee more, but defiring without Uneafiness, and Satisfied so as never to be Cloyed. Where the Sun of Righteousness sheds the refreshing Beams of his excellent Beauty upon every Head; and the Original Light is so diffused that every Inhabitant of those blissful Regions shines by the Reflection; For being constantly united to the Deity, they are transformed into the likeness of the Divine Immortality and Perfections, thus receiving the full effect of their Holy Lord's Promise, John 17. 21. 24. Father I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behole the glory which thou half given me, and all be one in us, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

Oglorious Kingdom, to the Inheritance whereof we are advanced, without the melancholy
Forms of Death and Succession, and whose possession knows no Change or End; but One perpetual Day, subject to no revolution of Time;
and never fading Laurels upon the Head of each
triumphant Soldier, who hath sought mansully,
and wheathered all the Toil and Hardships of

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this spiritual Warfare ! How do I long for that most blessed Time, when this poor unworthy Creature, the last and least of all my Master's Servants, shall be called upon to put off this Load of Sin and Corruption, and thus disburdened, remove, and fix my Habitation in thy Heavenly City, mingling with that harmonious Hoft above, and doing Homage with them in the bleffed prefence of my glorious Lord : Released not only from the fenfe, but even the forrowful remembrances of Death and Suffering, Ignorance and Infirmity, Diseases and Temptations, Decays, and Pains, talfe Pleasures, and violent Passions. which are our constant Exercise and Misery, while we continue our journey through this Valley of Tears. naigoon yan moggel forthed queb

when I thell a P. ville the Dot of the best

Of the Comforts afforded good Men under their present Troubles.

Such the Incumbrances of awretched mortal State: Wretched indeed, if considered, either with regard to the Weight laid upon it, or its own inability to sustain the heavy Load. But blessed, and for ever magnified be the Mercy of our God; who, while he afflicts and disciplines by his Providence, does not leave us destitute of the powerful Assistances and sweet Consolations of his Grace! I feel myfelf indeed Oppreff d' and Pierced through with many Soprows, and anxious Fears; my Life I know med mortly have an End, the Guile of my Sins Wike me with Hortor and Amaz mont. For Deathy I am ferifible, confines me over to Judgment, and the Torments of Hell are the due Reward of my evil Deeds; and what defence to make for myfelf I dennot tell, in that Day when every Action; and Word, and Thought, fhall undergo a ferutiny more exact and fevere,

than I at prefent am able to conceive. to soonand

These are such mortifying Resections, as must of necessity fick me into Despair, did not my Lord, according to his wonted Goodness, interpole, and in the midft of my Lamentations and deep Diffress, support my drooping Soul, and she Twage my Anguish with prospect of Mercy, when I shall stand most in heed of it. By these exalting my Hopes, and carrying my Mind to the Tops of the everlatting Hills, to the ferene and peaceful Regions of Blifs; ftrengthening myFaith and refreshing me in the pleasant Pastures of the Rivers of Waters : Shewing me the plenceous Provition made for the Entertainment of west ed and famished Souls. This glorious Sight mak's me forget my Sufferings, fostens and even recommends my prefent Troubles, leaves me no longer groveling upon the Duft, but leaves Earth and its vain Object behind; to that I then look down with difdain upon the Tomults and Dangers. the Follies and Miferies of this World, and, with a Mind

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Mind perfectly composed, can rest myself upon Thee, the true, the only, the undisturbed Peace of every truly pious and devout Christian.

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An Ast of Love and Devotion.

Love thee, O my God and defire to love thee Levery Day more fervently. For thou art beautiful and amiable above the Sons of Men, and deservest an Affection equal to thy own adorable and incomprehenfible Excellencies. Equal to the maryellous Instances of Goodness. of which thy tender Care for, and unspeakable Condescensions in working out the eternal Salvation of Mankind, have given fuch plentiful, fuch aftonishing Proofs. O let that Fire descend into my Heart, which burns with a bright and holy Flame, never languishing, never to be quenched. May every Part of me feel the kindly hear ; may it expand it telf, and burn up every other Passion; that all the Dross of vain and polluted Passions and Desires being entirely confumed, I may be turned all into Love, and know no other Object of that Love, but Thee alone, my dearest, sweetest. and most lovely Saviour.

By that most holy, that most precious Blood, which thou west content to shed upon the Cross for our Redemption, grant me, I beseech thee, the Grace of a truly contrite and devout Heart at

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all times; but then especially, when I approach thy Majesty in Prayers and Praises, and thankful Commemorations of the mysterious Methods of Man's Redemption, that most stupendous, most conspicuous and everlasting Monument of the Divine Mercy. When I (unworthy, I confess, of so high a Priviledge) prostrate myself before thy Altar, and assist in that heavenly Sacrifice, which Thou, my undefiled High-Priest, hast instituted for a Memorial and Pledge of thy Love; and for the daily Repair of those Breaches which Sin and Frailty make upon our Souls, by these frequent and lively Representations of that Death and Passion, by vertue whereof alone we are, or can be saved.

While I attend upon these holy Mysteries, let my Mind I most humbly pray thee, be sensibly comforted, and my Faith confirmed with the Joys of thy bleffed Presence. Let me find thee nigh at hand, and be affected as becomes one who justly values the Honour and Happiness of such a Union with thee. Let my spiritual Delights be ravishingly sweet, my Love of thee exceeding strong and ardent, my inward Hungerings after thee refreshed. For thou art the Bread of Life, every Day eaten, yet still whole and never confumed: Lord, grant me evermore this Nourishment. Thou art the Light eternal, never eclipsed, never extinct; O shine into my Heart, warm, enlighten. and fanctify me, that I may be a chosen Vesfel for thy Use, purged from all wicked Filth, filled

Fullness. So shall Ispiritually seed upon thy Flesh, and seel my Soul effectually sustained in the Strength of this heavenly Repast; so shall I be nourished unto Life indeed, and living of thee, and by thee, at last be conducted to thee, and for ever rest in thee.

O Banquet of Love, heavenly fweet, let my Bowels be refreshed by thee, my inward Part of verflow with the Necture of thy Love, and my Soul burft out with zealous Expressions of the Praise continually. My God is Love itself, sweet ter than Honey to my Mouth ; Sustenance and Joy; make me live and grow in thee, and correct my viciated Palate, that I may truly relianthy heavenly Delights, and lose all Taste, all Apperite for any other. Thou art the Soul of my Life the Staff of my Hope, the Endand Sum of all my Defires. O do thou poffers my whole Heart, preside over every Faculty, Direct my Understanding, exalt my Affections, and quench the Thirff of my longing SouP with those Rivers of Pleasure which flow at thy fight Hand for evermore. Lee every fleshly and turbulent Defire be awed into Silence, and all Imagination of things in Heaven, and Air, and Earth, flee from before thee. Let Dreams and fancied Revelations, let every Word and Sign, and Thought give way; and even the Soul itself stand mure, go out of itself, and be employed in the Contemplation of thee alone? for thou art my Hope and my only Trust and Sun through

chrough the Vileness of my own Condition, and especially through the Faults and Frailties of my Life, might reasonably that me out from any Hope, that so Great and Holy a God should admit so polluted a Wretch into Communion with him; yet in regard the Word of God hath condescended to dwell in my Flesh, and united his Divine to our Human Nature, I can with Considence look up to that powerful intercessor at thy right Hand, and will not doubt but I shall one Day be excited to the same Place, where my Flesh and Blood does in my Jesus already sit triumphant. To whom be Praise and Glory, Honour and adoration, and Thanksgiving for ever,

heavenly Delights and lote all Taffe, all Appe-

The Pleasure of meditating upon God.

I TO W tweet, O gracious Lord, who in wonderful Kindnets haft to loved and faved,
enlivened and fanctified, and exalted us; how inempressibly sweet are the Thoughts and Remembrances of Thee! The more I dwell on these Reflections, the more I feel my Soul exhiberated
and transported with them. The Excellencies of
thy Nature, and merciful Dispensations of thy
Browidence, I contemplate with the most abstracted Simplicity of Thought that my present
State is capable of; and feel the Delights resulting

ting from them (well to a Pitch, as high as this Distance of a Sojournor in a strange Land admits. More I covet earnestly, and daily aspire after, and can but covet and aspire after, during my Confinement to a Body of Flesh and Frailty. I am wounded with the Darts of thy Love, and burn with eager Defire of feeing and being infeparably united to him whom my Soul longeth to enjoy. I will therefore stand upon my Guard, and take good heed to my Ways: I will fing with the Spirit, and with the understanding, and exert my utmost Activity in setting forth the Prais fes of him, who hath made me his own by a double Title, first by Creating, and then by renewing and restoring my Nature. My Soul shall mount above the highest Heavens, and in Defire dwell with thee continually; that however my bodily Presence detained me here below, yet in my Inclinations and Affections I may dwell above, and fo my Heart be, where thou its best and most defirable Treasure art.

But pity, I beseech thee, gracious Lord, the Impotence and Infirmities of thy Servant, who, the more he contemplates thine infinite Majesty and Goodness, the more conscious he is of his Disability to rise up to the Dignity of that Subject. My Heart is too narrow, and thy unbounded Excellencies, thy Beauty, and Power, and Glory, and Love, exceed the largest Comprehensions of any Human Mind. As the Brightness of thy Majesty is unconceivable, so are the Bowels of that everlasting

everlasting Mercy, by which thou adoptest them for thy own Children, and receivest them to be one with thyself, whom thou at first createdst

out of nothing.

Confider, O my Soul, the Greatness of this Love, and the noble Privileges accruing to thee from it: For if thou hast just Notions of these things, thou wilt be perfectly convinced that, if the enduring daily Pains and Sickness, nay, if the Torments of Hell itself for a season, were made the Condition of beholding Christ in his Glory, and being received into the Number and Society of the Bleffed above; no Suffering could be fo exquifite, that they ought not to be gladly entertained; none which would not find themselves abundantly recompenced, by obtaining a Portion in that transcendant Felicity. What though the Devils then lay wair for us, and draw us into tharp Tryals of our Virtue; what tho' this Body be macerated with Fasting, fretted with Sackloth fatigued with Toil, and dried up with want of Sleep; what though my Enemy deride, or rail against, or create me Mischief and Disquiet; through Cold, or Want, or Pain, or Sickness wear out a tedious Life in Sighs and inceffant Complaints; let my Strength be spent in Heaviness, and my Years in Mourning; let me roar for very anguish of Heart, and my Body have no Soundnels, or whole Part in it, provided I may find rest in the Day of Tribulation, Psal 106: 5. and rejoice everlafting

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rejoice at last in the felicity of thy chosen, and give thanks with thine inheritance.

For how can we esteem that Glory according to its Worth, or what can be a purchase equivalent to that Happiness, in which the Face of every Righteous Man shall shine as the Sun in its Strength? When the Lord shall reckon up his People, and distribute them in their respective Ranks, and the degrees of Blis differing from each other, in proportion to the good they have done in their respective Bodies. When he shall put the faithful in poffession of those Promises they fo long depended upon; and in exchange for earthly give them heavenly, for temporal and transitory, eternal and never-fading Goods; and make them who have acquitted themselves well in a very little, Rulers over much. Nothing fure can be added to the happiness of that Day when the Lord shall introduce his holy ones into his Father's Presence, and make them to fit down with himself in heavenly Places, that God may be all in all.

O Blifs inexpressible, to see the Saints, to be with them, to be one of them; to fee God as he is and to poffess him for ever and ever! O lec this Blifs be often in our thoughts, always uppermost, nay, only in our defires : For it deserves the whole of us, and this is the method of enfuring it to our selves. For if the greatness of the Prize put you, as well it may, upon enquiring how you can ever hope to compass it: which

way you can deserve it, or what assistances are necessary for this purpose; the answer is short and ready. For God hath ordained that it is in every Man's Power to be Happy, Matth 11 the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence; to defire, and resolve, and endeavour, and strive, is to be Qualified. and no Man ever failed in his Attempt

who was willing to take by Force.

This Kingdom is indeed an invaluable Treatfure, but yet every Man is capable of being a purchaser, because the only Price God expects for it is a Man's felf. Give but yourself, and this will be looked upon as a Confideration sufficient. And therefore never be discouraged at the Disproportion betwirt what you can pay, and what you hope to Receive ! For the Purchase is paid by another Hand to the utmost Farthing. This was done when Christ gave himself; and he gave himself, that he might ransom you, Rom 6. and make your Heart a Kingdom for his Father to reign in. Deliver therefore yourself into his Posfestion, that Sin may no longer reign in your Body unto Death, but that God may dwell and reign in you by his Spirit, for the Attainment of everlasting Life.

How eager then, my Soul should we be to return to that heavenly City, where our Home and our Privileges are, where we are free Denizens, and have our Names enroll'd in the Book of God? Rom 8. 17. Since therefore we are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, Heirs of God and

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Joint-heirs with Christ, let us very diligently represent to ourselves the glorious advantages of these Characters, and the Bliss of our Native Place, in the best Light our present Thoughts can set them. Let us cry out with the Prophet of old, Psal 87. 3. How excellent things are spoken of thee thou City of God! All thy Inhabitants are like them that sing, Psal 48. 2. Beautiful art thou for situation. and the joy of the whole earth. Into thy Gates enter neither old Age, nor Decay, nor Misery: No Lame or Maimed, no Desormity or Desect, Ephes 4. 13. but all grow up into a persect man, unto the measure of the stature

of the fulness of Christ.

What can be wanting, what be added, to the Happiness of that Life, which is never threatned with Poverty or Sickness, never molested with Wrongs or Violence, with Anger or Envy, or exorbitant Desire: Where all the present Necessities of Nature cease; and the restless Ambition of Honour and Power and Riches find no place: Where we are no longer in fear of any Devil, or in danger of his Temptations, or in fo much as a poffibility of his Torments: Where neither Body nor Soul can die, but both are endued with a Life everlasting, ever delightful: No Casualties, no Malice, no Quarrels or Factions, but univerfal Agreement, profound Peace, and perfect Love: Where the Day never declines, but a Light as perpetual as it is glorious? Rev 21. 3. For that City bath no need of the fun neither of the moon to Mine Vitanolaos

Shine in it, but the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Nay, the Saints too Dan 12. 3 shall shine as the Brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness,

as the Stars for ever and ever.

Hence there is no Night, nor Darkness, ror Clouds; no extremities of Heat and Cold, but fuch a happy Temper in all respects, I Cor 2. 9. as no eye bath feen or ear beard, neither bath it entered into the heart of any man to conceive; except those happy Souls, whom their own Experience fh.ll instruct, and whose Names are written in the Book of Life, To all which we may add the Honour and Happiness of affosiating with Patriarchs and Prophets, of conversing with Apostles, and Martyrs, and Saints, and all those dear Relations and Friends, who went thither before us. These are very glorious Advantages, but that which excels them all is, that we shall see the Face of God, and ever admire, and Gaze upon, and rejoice in his excellent Glory. O Happiness inestimable, when we shall see God, and enjoy him in ourselves, and and when this Sight and Fruition shall never have any Interruption, any End.

CHAP. X.

Of loving God, and the Advantages of doing fo.

T H E Soul which is stamped with the Image of God, and is glorious in proportion to her conformity

conformity with his Holine/s, hath from her Maker an innate Principle which reminds her of her Duty; and enables her either to persevere stedfast with God, or quickly to return to him, if at any time, through Violence of her Passions, or any other Imperfections, the be drawn afide. Nor hath she only hopes of preserving a spiritual Life, by the reviving prospect of Mercy and Pardon, but is allowed to aim at higher matters, and aspire to the Marriage of the Word and Lamb himfelf, to enter into strict Bonds of inviolable Amity with God, and to be yoked in Love with the King of Angels, the same the same of the s

Of fuch mighty efficacy is Love, if it bring our Will to a resemblance of God, and assimilate us to that Object by inclination, which we already resemble by Nature; all which is done, when we love as we are beloved. For Love is the only Motion and Affection of the Soul, which can qualify a Creature to answer the ends of his Creator, and to make, though not a full, yet an acceptable and thankful Compensation for all its Goodness to it. Where Love takes place it presently gets Dominion, and brings over all the rest of the Affections in subjection to itself. Love is of itself fufficient, and pleases for its own sake. reputed Defert, this is both the Duty and Reward, the Cause and the Effect of doing well: By this we are reconciled, and intimately united to God.

Love makes twoMinds become one, it inspires the

the standard and Rule by which we frame our Actions and Dispositions. It considers things prefent as though they were not; and looks upon heavenly and spiritual things with a pure unprejudiced View. It first prevails with Men to be have themselves decently in matters of this World, so as to despise all below; and at last to fix their View upon those of another, and dwell with Delight upon the mysterious Excellencies of God himself. It lets us into those Beauties of the divine Nature, which are otherwise too high and dark for us to behold, and helps us to imitate, what it helps us to see and to admire!

God the Father is Love, God the Son is Love, God the Holy Ghost is the Father's and the Son's Love. This Love requires a Production of somewhat like it in ourselves; such a mutual Affection I mean, as may unite us to, and render us nearly related to itself. Love is an Enemy to Distance and formal Respect; it gives us Confidence in approaching to God, aspires after a friendly and familiar Conversation with him, and emboldens us to speak to him without fear or doubting. He lives to no purpose who lives without this Grace. But he that keeps his Eyes always fixed upon God, as the supreme, the sole Object of his Thoughts and Defires, he meditates upon him, delights in him, is fed and wourished by him

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A Man thus devoted to him fings his Praises,

pours out his Prayers, reads his Word, performs every Part of his Duty, and demeans himfelf in every Action of his Life, with fuch Care and Circumfpection, as if his bodily Eyes faw God prefent (as in truth he is present) with him in every thing he fays or does. His Prayers are fo fervent, and his Mind in them fo exalted, as if it were no longer in the Body, but translated and rapt up into that glorious Place, where Dan. 7. thousand thous ands of angels proftrate themselves before the Throne of the Majesty on high, and ten thousand times ten thou fand minfter unto bim. The Soul which is visited by Love, is effectually awakened out of its Sleep; it is softened and instruded. and imitten with its Force, This turns Darkness into Light, opens that which was thut, warms and fires that which was frozen, fmooths the rough, and angry, and impatient, chafes away vicious, and fubdues carnal Affections, corrects the Temper, and renews the Spirit of the inner Man, It is an effectual Check to the Follies and the Levities of Youth, and a strong Guard against spiritual Dangers and Temptations. So lenfible. to strong, is the Power of Love, when cherished and present with us; but when this cools or quite goes out, our good Dispositions languish and die, and can no more be preferved, than Fire without Fewel, or the boiling of aPot, when the Heat is taken from under it. I was an all the same we

Great are the Advantages of this Virtue, which gives the Soul immediate Access with Confidence

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was out his Pravers, reads his Word, performs to God, and stands in no need of any Introducer; which preferves a close Union with him, and consults him freely upon any Emergency that requires his Counsel and Help. A Soul thus affected hath God continually in its Thoughts and Discourse, and despises, disdains every thing besides, All its Resections, all its Conversation relish of this Love; so entirely is the Man in the Possession of it, The way to know God truly is to love him; it is to very little purpose that we read or meditate, that we hear or preach, or pray if this be not at the Bottom of all our religious Exercises. For by loving God we come to love our own Souls, and to be follicitous for their Safety and true Happiness The End of God's loving us, is, that we may love him in return; and the requiring this at our Hands, is a fresh Instance of his Favour, because he knows that they who love him are fure to be happy upon that very Ac-Page, It is an effectual Check forthe Politanuo

The Soul that loves, renounces all its own Appetites, and attends to this only, that so it may answer the End of being loved by loving again. And, though in our Payment of this Tribute we be never so profuce, yet what alas! Is this in comparison of that inexhausted Source of Love, ever runnin over, ever flowing in upon us? For we greatly mistake, if we have the vanity to imagine, that we pay, and what we receive, the Soul and God, the Creature and the Creator can ever meet upon equal Terms. But if a Man Love with

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with his whole Heart, though this be nothing as to any intrinsick Value of its own, yet it is esteemed not to be defective, because he is capable of no more. Let not the Soul then that thus loves God be discouraged; the only just Cause of Fear is, when we do not love him as we may

and ought.

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The Soul that loves after this Manner, is eager in her Wishes, fixed in her Defires, lays no stress upon her best Actions, but thinks all she can do too little; is not terrified by the Majesty of God. but ravished with Delight in the Contemplation of his Mercy, takes Sanctuary in his Goodness, and converses with him frequently and freely. This does as it were carry the Man quite out of himself, and make him act separately from his bodily Senses, that he seems to have no longer any regard to himself, but is entirely swallowed up in God. Nor are these airy and romantick Notions, but such as every ones Experience will confirm to him, when transported with the unspeakable Sweetness of heavenly Meditations. He does then as it were make an Escape from every other Object, that he may be diverted and interupted by no other Thoughts, but enjoy perfect Happiness, and give himself up entirely to God. Nothing could add to this ravishing Satisfaction, were but the Continuance equal to the Intenfenels of it. For the Love of God contracts an intimate Acquaintance with him, that Acquaintance begets Assurance creates a sensible Delighe. and

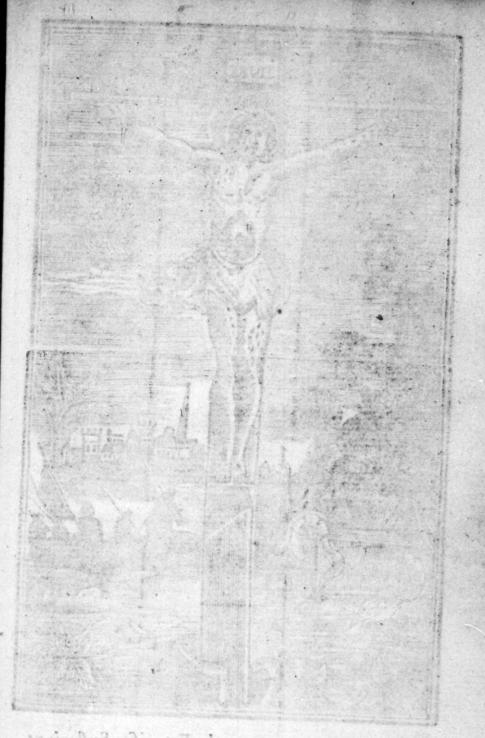
and that Delight breeds a Defire of more and greater Intimacies. A Soul thus enflamed is full of Longings and Thirstings, and often cries out with the Psalmist, Psal 42. 1. Like as the bart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my soul

after thee, O God.

Love brought down God to Men, this induced him to dwell among Men, this moved himtelf to be made Man: He in his Nature is invitible, but this render'd him not only visible, but; in wonderful Condescention, be like to his own Servants: It was Love, that wounded him for our Transgressions: Incomprehensible, unexampled Love, that made his Soul heavy to the Death. and powered out his Heart's Blood upon the Crofs. Love, that provided a fure Retreat for Miferable Sinners by opening that Paffage to their Saviour's Heart: For thither now I can betake myself, and what I want of Merit of myfelf supply out of the Bowels of my pierced Redeemer. There is a per-petual Spring of Mercy, and through the Orifice in his Body I can approach the Recesses of his Soul. These Wounds unlock the Mystery of Godlines, and shew me all that render Compassion of my Lord, Luke 1. 78. whereby the Dayspring from on high vifued lost Wretches, when they fat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

The Wounds of Christ are full of Pity, full of Virtue, full of Sweetness and kindness inexpressible. They Pierced his Hands and his Feet, and thrust through his Side with a Spear. By these

Paffages



Direct Refusion, when the Expell Sufferings, of air Dear Lord and Sovieur Jesus Christ.

"Here Situate Boundal By an Eye of Lath, what thy design hath Suffer duri thee.



Devout Reflections, upon the Exquisite Sufferings, of our Dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Here Sinner Behold! By an Eye of Faith, what thy Saviour hath Suffer'd for thee.

Pallages I can talk how gracious my Lord hath been; for he is indeed gentle, and long-inflating, and of great Pity to all them that call upon him faithfully, to all that leek him diligently, to all that love him, who hath fo wonderfully first loved them. In the Wounds of our bleffed Saviour we have plenteous Redemption, and there we may find abundant Goodness, ravishing Delight, Fulness of Grace, and perfection of Vartue.

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The good Effects of Meditating on Christ's Death and Sufferings.

THen any finful Imagination folicits me, I straight take Sanctuary in my Saviour's Wounds. when the Flesh weight down thy Soul, the Remembrance of his Sufferings breaks all my Fetters, and fets me free by heavenly Thoughts When the Devil lays his Shares to entrap and delirby me. I flee for Help to the renderMercies of my dying Lord, and the Enemy foon feels himself disappointed and draws off. If Loft be kindled in my Breaft, and thir my Body to Rebellion, I reflect on the Agonies of the Son of God for my Sake, and preferrly those impute Fires are quenched. In any lort of Sufferings or Diftrefs I find no Comfort, no Relief comparable to the Confideration of my afflicted Saviour . In his Wounds I can lay me down and fleep fecurely, thefe

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these are my Desence and the Support of my Soul, in any Temptation that assaults, in any Affliction that befalls me.

Christ died for us, surly then the Bitterness of Death is past, and nothing can be so grievous to human Nature than it may not be mollissed by this Consideration. In that Death of his is all my Hope and Trust, I Plead no other Merit, I ask no other Resuge; this is my Health, my Life, nay, my second and better Life, my Resurrection from the Dead. His Mercies are great, unmeasurably great, and how worthless soever I may be in my self, yet while I am looked upon as having a Share in these, I cannot be rejected or despised. For his Mercies prove him willing to save, and therefore his Power is no longer a Terror, but my best Security.

I am indeed a very grievous Sinner, and my Conscience upbraids me with numberless and heinous Transgressions against God and his most righteous Laws; but, notwithstanding these Reproaches of my own Breast make me sometimes uneasy and asraid, yet do I not despair because Rom 6. 1. where Sin hath abounded, there hath grace much more abounded. Nay I must not, I dare not despair for this were to bind one Fault upon another, and to aggravate all the Wickedness I had ever been guilty of before. For he that despairs of Forgivness for his Offences, does, in effect, declare that God is not Merciful; and by distrusting robs him of his beloved Attribute; which

which is the highest Outrage and Injustice that any Man can possibly commit against God. He does, as much as in him lies, bear testimony in Contradiction to that Love, and Truth, and Power, which are the only Foundation on which all Hopes are built. For how could I hope, had not his Love adopted me, had not his Truth promised, had not his Power redeemed me? Let then my foolish Misgivings murmur within me never so importunately, let them ask me never so infultingly, what can I pretend to, or how dare I presume to suppose, that any Deserts of mine should procure me so excellent, so very disproportionate a Reward; still my Hope stands firm, and I shall reply with Affurance, as St. Paul hath left me a Pattern, 2 Tim 1. 13. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he who made me his own Son by Adoption, loves me exceedingly, that he who is true will be as good as his Word, and that he who is Almighty can lie under no Temptation, not to make it good; he can perform his promise to the uttermost, and the very promising shews him as willing as he is able to do it.

My Sins are not only great but many, but neither their Quality nor their Number terrifies me, when the Death of my Saviour comes into my Mind, because I know they cannot, in either respect outweigh his Sufferings upon my Account. The Nails and Spear proclaim my Deliverance, and attest my Reconciliation with Christ provi-

ded I fincerely love him. The Soldier opened me an Entrance into his Side, and into the Clefts of those Wounds I can recreat with Safety. If any Man be afraid of his Condition let him learn to love; for this Love will be fore to cast out all angious and desponding Pear, Our Redeemer fractched out his Arms agon the Crofs, by that Pofture to fignify his Readiness to receive Sinners into his Embraces, when they fice to him for Succour In those dear Arms I delight to live, and in them I defire to die. There can I with a light and joyful Heart fing with the Propher, Pfal. 30. 1. will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast fet me up. end not made my foes to triump over me. Our kind Saviour bowed his Head when he gave up the Ghoft, and in fo doing stooped down to meet and kiss his beloved ones. And every one of us may be properly faid to kifs our Lord, every time we feel our Hearts fenfibly wounded, and devoutly affected with his Love.

And shall not this be the constant Effect of our Meditations upon it? Yes sure, my Soul, since thou art honoured by the Impress and Character of thy great Maker, since thou art ransomed with the most precious Blood of thy Redeemer, since thou art betrothed to this divine Spouse by Faith, endowed with his Spirit, adorned with his Graces, and advanced to the Dignity of Angels in his gracious Designs for thy everlasting Felicity; do thy diligence to love him, who hath so wonderfully loved thee: Set thy Heart upon him, who sets his

bis upon thee; feek him who hath fo folicitously fought thee; whoseGoodness hath prevented thee and is the Cause of thine. He is the Merit, he theReward, he theFruit and theEnd of thyLove, Conform thyself therefore in all things to him; let his Care excite thine, his Leisure entertain thine; be clean with the clean, and holy with the holy. Such as thou prefentest thyself before God; such Apprehensions it is plain thou entertainest concerning him. If thou believeft him full of Meekness, and Goodness, and Mercy, thou canst not but conclude, that he expects all hisChildren should be gentle and kind, compassionate and humble. Strive to be like him then, and let this Likeness prove, (for nothing else can prove it) that thou dost truly love him, whose Compassion brought thee out of the Mire and Clay, and drew thee back from the bottomless Pit of Destruction.

Chuse him for thy Friend, and prefer him before all other Friends, who when all other Confidences for sook and betray'd thee, was the only,
one that stuck close to thee in thy Extremity, in
the Day of thy Death, when no Friend else will
or can do thee Service, he will not desert thee;
Then will this kind Saviour be sure to stand by
thee, and save thee from the Reproof of him that
would eat thee up; deliver thy Soul from those
roaring Lions that wait ready to tear it in Pieces,
and carry it up on high through unknown Ways;
bring thee to the heavenly ferusalem, and place
thee amongst Angels in his own Presence, where

thou shalt hear that heavenly Song, Holy, holy, holy, &c. There is the Voice of Joy and Health, of Thanksgiving and Praise, and never ceasing Halelujahs: There is the Persection of Happiness, and Glory, and Gladness, and every thing Defirable and Good.

Pant eagerly, my Soul, and let all thy Defires loofe after this bleffed Place; that thou mayeft come into that City above, of which fuch glorious things are fpoken. And Love will earry thee thither, how steep foever the Ascent may feem. For this furmounts al Difficulties, and leaves nothing impossible to the Person acted by it. This takes frequent Flights thither even while upon Earth, and walks with great Preedom through the Streets of Jerulalem above; it visits the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apollies beholds with Wonder the regular Armies of Martyrs and Confessors; and the Beauty of chaste and holy Virgins. In thort, both Heaven and Earth, and every thing in each, are ever inculcating this Duty that I ought to Matth. 22. 37. love the Lord my God, with all my beart, with all my mind, with all my foul, and with all my strength.

But, were not this necessary in Point of Duty, yet it is absolutely so in Point of interest and Prudence. For, when the Heart of Man is not fixed upon this Object, it is never fixed any where; but roves about perperually from one thing to another, feeking Rest where it is never to be found. Now the Reason why it can never meet with

Satisfaction

Satisfaction in any of these frail and transitory Matters, which captivate its Affections, is because the Soul is above them all, and of a Condition so excellent, that no Good but the supreme Good can answer the Desires, or prove its adequat Happiness. For God hath endued it with such a Principle of Liberty, that it cannot be compelled to the Commission of any Sin: And therefore every Man's Salvation or Damnation turns at last upon his own Choice. Hence no Man can bring a richer Present to God than an honest and good Heart. This brings God down to us, and carries us up to him. By this we love God, and chuse God, and arrive at him, and attain to the Enjoyment of him.

This is the thing, that by the Affistance of divine Grace, renews us, and restores our primitive Likeness to God: This is of so great Account with him, that his Spirit will not dwell with them that have it not. This engages him to be with us, and reign in us, and makes the Soul a Receptacle for the Majesty of the whole Trinity. The Wisdom of God enlightens it to the Knowledge of the Truth; the Love of God inflames it with Desire of his Goodness; and the tatherly Affection of God preserves his own Creature, that the holy Motions he inspires, and the Person inspired

by them, should not perish.

CHAP. XII.

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Of the Knowledge of the Truth.

UT what is it to know the Truth, and by what Steps we come to it? The first is, for a Man to be throughly acquainted with himfelf. to make it his Business to correct and reform what ever he finds amis in himself. The next is. to know and to love the God that made him : for this is the whole, the Duty and the Happiness of Man. Now, in order hereunto, we shall do well to observe, how passing good God hathbeen to us, and what Obligations we have to love him in return. He made us out of nothing when we had no Being; and all we have received everfince we came into Being is his Gift. But because we are degenerated in our Affections, and love the Gift more than the Giver, the Creature more than the Creator, we fell into the Snare of the Tempter, and became the Servants of Sin and the Devil. When we were reduced to this milerable Condition, God look'd upon us with an Eye of Pity, and fent his Son to break our Chains, and release us from our Slavery. He sent his holy Spirit too, the Sririt of Adoption, and exalted his Servants to the Dignity of Sons. He gave his Son to be our Ransom, and his holy Spirit to be. the Pledge of his Love; and he reserves the whole of Himself for our future Reward and Inheritance.

Thus God in infinite Compassion and Kindness for the exceeding Tenderness he bore to Mankind,

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Mankind, hath not only been liberal in his Bleffings, but hath even laid out himfelf for our Advantage, that he might reftore loft Man; not for much to God, who couldnot suffer that loss, as to his own felf, whe must have been otherwise irrepairably undone by it. That Men might be born of God, God condescended to be born of a Woman. And what Heart is so insensible, so hard and flinty, as not to be fostened with such asto. nishing Advances of Love; a Love which began entirely on God's Part, and was to ftrangely great, that he vouchfafed to become Man, purely for the Sake and Benefit of Man? Who can hate any other Man, whose Nature and Likeness he fees in the Son of God made Man? Certain it is: that he who hates his Brother, does by necessary Consequence have God; and he who haves God; will find that all his pretended good Works are nothing worth.

Now God was made Man for our Sakes, that he who had been our Creator might be our Redeemer also, and that human Nature might contribute to its own Redemption. Again, God appeared in the true Likeness of Man, that by his Condescention Man might be better acquainted with God, and love him with a more free and tender Affection, whom he saw stoop down to the same Level, and a sort of Equality with himself. Thus all the Faculties of our Souls are made happy in the Contemplation of him: Those of the Rational, in his divine Perfections: and those

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of the Sensitive, in his human Body. So admirably contrived is this Mystery of Godline's to engage our Affections, that Man in every Capacity might meet with Objects suitable to him, and, whether he go in or out he might find Pasture in his God and Saviour.

Such are the Benefits of the Son of God in our Flesh, all which are more compleat by the Miffion of the holy Spirit. The Son was born, and crucified, and died for us, that by that Death of his he might destroy Death which before had Dominion over us. Now, when the Grape of Flesh was fqueez'd in the Wine-press of the Cross, the Spirit of Grace was fent to cleanse our Hearts, that we might be Veffels prepared, and meet for our Mafter's Use, and new wine might be put into new bottles. This was necessary, first, that our Hearts being purged, the Liquor put into them might not be tainted; and then, that being feal'd up, what they contain might not be loft. They are cleanfed; when they ceale to rejoice in, and have no longer any Relish for Sin; and they are fealed up when fortified against Temptations, and the Seducements of vain and worldly Delights. For that which is Good couldnot be received by them, till that which is Evil is first taken away. The Love of Sin pollutes, the Love of Vanity spills the Wine: The former fouls the Veffel the latter makes it deaky. Thou of aculties of our . washit askam

The Love of Sin, makes as delight in that which is evil, the Love of Vanity engages our Affections

Affections to Things unprofitable and of no Conthuance. Put away theerfore the Evil, that you may make room for the Good: Pour out the bitter and the Vapid, that you may be filled with the generous and delicious. Rom 14. 17. The holy Ghost is Joy and Love: Cast our the Spirit of the Devil, and of this World, and you shall receive the Spirit of God. The Spirit of the Devil disposes us to love Sin; the Spirit of this World, to delight in empty and imaginary loys: These are both Evil, the former is directly vicious, and the other bath a Tendency to Vice. But when these Spirits are dispossessed, the Spirit of God will incceed into their Place, He will enter into the Tabernacle of thy Heart, and produce holy Joy, and holy Love. The Love of the World allures, and deceives, and betrays; the Love of Sin defiles and deftroys: and therefore these must be expelled by their Contraties. And fach is the Love of God. For this enlightens the Understanding, purifies the Conscience, fills the Soul with true loy, and leads us to the Sight and Knowledge of God, and his glorious Perfections.

CHAP. XIII.

The Marks and Fruits of true Love.

THE Man that truly loves God, is always thinking when he shall be so happy as to be with him; when he shall leave the World and make

make an Escape out of this Prison of Corruption that his Soul might be free, and find pertect Eafe and Peace. And even while in the Flesh, he lives not after the Flesh, but sends his Thoughts and Defires up to Heaven before him fitting or flanding, in motion or at reft; in every Posture, in every Action, he keeps God continually in his Mind, He is very zealous in persuading others to love God, and representing to them the Duty. and Advantage of doing fo : He indeavours to convince them how Pleasant this is, and how unfatisfactory and tormenting the Love of the World. And to prove that all this is not mere Cant and Affection, his Temper, his whole Conversation speak him to be in very good earnest, and confirm the Truth of his Arguments.

The Honours and Riches of this present Life he looks down upon it with a Just Disdain: Pities or despises the Misery of those who take such Pains about them; shews how extreamly toolish it is, to place one's Confidence in things that are continually flying from one. Wonders at the Blindness and Stupidity of the Wretches that dost upon them; and, that every body does not fee fee fo little in them, as to quit thefe for somewhat more substantial. He is satisfied, that would they submit to make the Experiment without Prejudice or Passion, all the World would approve his better Choice, find inexpressible Pleas fure in what he loves, and be fully fatisfied in the Truth of that which is to him evident beyond a Doubt. Tall ...

Doubt. He frequently entertains himself with the Contemplations of God, and feels a wonderful Comfort and Refreshment from them; the more sensible and sweet, in proportion as they are oftner repeated,. For that which is always worthy of our Praise and Love, cannot but be always

delightful to our Thoughts.

This is indeed the true Peace of the Soul when, it gets loose from all Distraction of Thought, and contracts all its Defires into God alone, as their proper Center. This leaves no vacant Space for other Inclinations, but all is full of that which employs it, and entirely contented with the Pleasure resulting from thence. And if at any time it happen, (as fometimes during this frail State it will) that any triffing Thought, or Multiplicity of Buliness come in between, all this is looked opon as Digreffion or Impertinence, and the Man makes all the hafte that possibly he can back to his main Point. To dwell upon any thing elle he looks upon as a Punishment, like that of being banished from on's own Country. For as there is no Moment of our Lives, in which we do not rafte fome fresh Instance of God's Goodness; to should there not be any neither, in which this great Benefactor, who is continually prefent by his Mercies, should not be present also in our Thoughts and thankful Remembrances.

This Confideration must needs make the Fault of those Men very great, who when they come to, converse with God in Prayer, presently dif-

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miss all their devout Affections, and behave themfelves as though he heither saw nor heard them.
And thus does every one, who pursues his own
finful or worldly Designs, and prefers some worthless Creature, by which his Mind is easily diverted from better and more important Considerations. And prefer such before God, who employs
more of his Pains and Thoughts upon this than
he does upon God, who ought to be perpetually
there, and constantly remembred as our Creator,
adored as our Redeemer, waited for as our

Saviour, feared as our Judge.

Consider therefore, Man, when the World begins to get within thee, what thou art doing, and where this Course will end : Withdraw thy self by degrees from Bufiness and Noise, and run away from the Confusion and Perplexity of a distracted Mind. Unload thy Cares, and give a little of thy Time to God; enter into thy Chamber, and commune with thy own Heart; let none be admitted into these Retirements besides him. and fuch Affiftants as may be useful in the Search after him, Then let thy Heart fincerely profess with the Prophet, Pfal. 27. 8. Thou halt faid, Seek ye my face ; thy face, Lord, will I feek : Yea. Lord, I covet earnestly ; but all in vain, except shou teach my Heart, where and how to feek, where and how to find thee. For if thou art not here, whither shall I go to look thee? But if thou art not only here, but every where, how comes it to pass that I do not discern thee? I am told thou

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thou dwellest 1. Tim. 6. 16. in the light, which no man can approach unto: And how vain is the Attempt to go in quest of a Person inaccessible? Or who shall conduct me thither, that I may see thee there, whither it seams no human Power can come? But by what Marks should I distinguish thee, having never seen thy Face? What shall this miserable Stranger do, that longs impatiently to behold thee, laments his Distance, and knows not how to shorten it; would gladly find thee and cannot tell where thou dwellest; desires to possess thee and yet does not know thy Face,

O Lord, thou art my God and I thy Creature. doubly thy Creature, by Nature first, and afterwards by Grace: All I ever had, and all I hope for, is of thy Hand alone; and yet I have not feen thee at any time, neither known thee : Nay, for this very End was I created, that I might feethee, and have not all this while attained the Intent of my Creation: . Hard the Fate of them, who answer not the End for which they were at all ! Yet such is now the miserable Case of Man; he is fallen from the Happiness to whichhe was defigned, into the Mifery which was never intended for him. That is departed from him, without which there can be no Happiness; and That remains with him, which in its own Nature is exquisitely miserable, Man did once eatAngels Food, which he now hungers after; but now he eats the Bread of Affliction, with which he then was utterly unacquainted.

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Pfal. 13. 1. How long, O Lord, will thou forset me, for ever? How long wilt thou bide thy face
from me? When with thou turn again, and hear
us? When, O when with thou enlighten out
Eyes, and thew us the Light of thy Countenance,
and reftore thyfelf to us? O turn us again, that
it may be well with us; for without thee we
must of necessity be inserable. Call us, and help
us to come night unto thee, we befeech thee. Our
Heart is overwhelmed with Bitterness and Anaguish by reason of its forlorn and desolate Condition: O let us be refreshed with the sweetness of
thy Consolations; I hunger after thee, let me hot
be sent empty away, but gratify the Appetite
which thou hast approved, which thou thyself
hast infused.

I am bowed down with my Infirmities, and not able to lift up my Eyes to Heaven: O loose me from this Bond, and make me strair, that I may seek after thee. Plat. 38. 4. My wickednesses are gone over my bead, and become a sore burden too beavy for me to bear. O let thy mighty Hand take off this weight, lest I sink under it, and the Pit shut her Mouth upon me. Teach me how to seek thee, for even this I cannot do without thy Guidance: Nor can I find thee, till thou art pleased in Mercy to shew thyself to me. Let me so seek as to desire, and so desire as diligently to seek thee, so love as to find as entirely to love thee.

CHAP. XIV.

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Acknowledge, O Lord, with all due thankfulnessy that Goodness of thine which created me after thy own Likenels, that I might Contemplate and Love, and Copy after my great Original. But alat / this Image of thine is fo Billied with Sin, to darkened with the Fumes of fenfual Lufts, that it can no longer attain to the resemblance thou intendedit it for unless thou please to take it again into thy Hands, and refresh the Impreffion. Grant me therefore Gracious Lord, not only a Redfast Paith, but a right UnderRanding, that I may know as much of thee as thou feeft necessary for my purpose: For such thou art in thyfelf, as thou haft taught us to beheve concerning thee. And we are taught to be-Heve thee a Being, to which nothing can be Imagined superior in Greatness or in Goodness. Now, what Being can this be, except such a one as hath all Perfection in itself, as only exists from itself, and gave existance to all other things, by creating them out of nothing! What Goodness then can be wanting in the supreme and Original Cause of Good in all besides? Thou must be therefore Just, and True, and Happy, and every other Perfection which is more definable to be, than not to be

But if Justice in Perfection be thy Effence and Nature, how comes it to pass, that thou does not exert it to the uttermost upon the Wicked who provoke

provoke it? It is because perfect and incomprehensible Goodness is equally natural and essential to thee? This is a Difficulty wrapped up in that Light which no Man can approach unto. in the impenetrable Abiss of thy Goodness, there rises it feems a Spring from whence iffue out the Streams of thy Mercy. For there is a most exact Harmony between all thy glorious Attributes, and being so sovereignly and perfectly Just, as at the same time to be fovereignly and perfectly Good, thy Compassion to Sinners makes no inconsistence between these contradictionary Excellencies. For thy Goodness, 'tis evident, would be less, if no ill Men had any experience of it; and he is more perfectly Good, who extends his kindness to good and bad Men both, than he who confines it to the good only; and so is he, who exercifes his Goodness in sparing and punishing too. than he who exerts it in no other instance, but that of punishing. This therefore gives a rational account of thy Mercy to them who least deferve it, that, being perfectly Good, thou canst not but in consequence of that, be Merciful.

O inexhaustible unmeasurable Goodness, which fo far surpasseth our largest Conseptions, let me also partake of thy Mercy, which is so rich, so unbounded: Let thy Clemency spare, and prevent the Vengance which I have Cause to dread from thy angry Justice: Let that Mercy which is ever flowing out of Thee, thed itself upon Mes Rouze up thyfelf, my Soul, and firetch thy intel-SNOVOIC

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lectual Powers to their utmost length, that thou mayst have the most sublime and worthy Apprehensions of the Divine Goodness, that this im-

perfect dim State will admit.

If each good thing we see and defire below be delightfull fingly, confider well, how exquifitely so that Good must be, which is Universal, and contains in itself the Charms of all the good things that are, and ever were, or shall be. And those not fuch Charms as we find and are fond of in created Beings, but as much above them, as Infinite excels Finite, and the Creator the Creature. If then Life derived from another be good, how excellent is that Life, by which all elle do live? If our Wisdom be so pleasant and desirable, which reaches no farther than the confideration of Objects that present themselves to us; how lovely, how adorable is that Wildom, by which those Objects were so admirably contrived, nay, commanded out of nothing? In thort, if different Objects according to their vast variety yield so very transporting, so very different Delights, think how inexpressibly full of delight He is, who communicated to each out of his own fulness, and so both made all these Objects, and made them Delightful? O the inestimable Blis of them that shall possess this Good! What will they have? What will they not have? They will have nothing to be fure which they had rather not have. They will be fure of every thing that can make Soul and Body both Happy: So great, fo manifold, 10

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19 porfect Blis, as eve hath not feen, nor ear heard, neither bath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

The Happiness of the Saints bereafter.

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7 HY doft thou then, deluded Creature, let thy defire run wild upon variety of Objects, and from these vainly expect, that Soul and Body (hould be Happy? Love that one Good, in which all others center, and this will answer all thy wifnes: Whatever can contribute to thy Outward or thy Iuward Man, is there to be met with in abundance. If Beauty delight thee, Luk 20, the Righteous are promised to shine as the Sun: If activity, or strength, or freedom of Operation which no relistance can obstrut, remember they shall be 1 Cor 15. as the Angels of God, and that which is fown a natural body, foal be raised a spiritual body; that is, it shall refemble those Spirits in activity, and Penetration, and Power, though not in Nature and Substance.

If length of Days, and a found Constitution be thy desire, there shall be Health unimpaired, and Immortality; for the Just shall live for ever, and their Health is of the Lord. If Gratistication of desires to the full; Psal 15. 17. they shall be satisfied when they awake up after their Lord's likeness. If Musical Entertainment, there the Annels.

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gels never ceafe their melodious Praises to God b If any chafte Pleafures & Pfal 36. 8. of fuch God shall give them to drink, as out of a river. If Wife dom, the most wife God shall then untook his Treasures, and let them into the Knowledge of his own mysterious Nature and Providence. If Friendthip; there they shall love God above themselves, and One another as themselves; and God fhall Love them more than they Love thema selves , It must be for fince they Love him and one another by and for him, and he Loves bimfelf and them by and for himfelt. If pertect Agreement, there shall be burlone Southand one Will, for they thall all have no Will but God's H Power, they hall be abiolyte Masters of their own Will, as God istof this For as God can der whatever he pleafes by his lown. Power, for they's fhall be enabled to do whatever they please, by and through him! For as they thall will nothing buck what he will, to he wille whatever they will must needs be accomplished of Honour and Riches God fiell, make his Dake. suga by fairbrut Arvants milers over many shinging may, the yollaste by dignified with the Title of the four of God, and shall be actually beirs of God, and joint being with Gheilt of the Course Possession they shalls have as much A flurance that no Parriot their Happineto finally eved forfake thempus their can have there they can never confene to part within andither God who loved them to ask direct them with bord cultureper take it away from them he loves fo dearly

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dearly against their Consent; or as they know, that nothing is stronger than God, or can separate between him and them. And who can conceive the Excellence and Greatness of that Joy, which must needs result from so unconceivably excellent and great a Good?

O Heart of Man, ever wanting somwhat to make up thy Satisfaction, every Day exercised with Pains and Sorrows, and almost quite oppresa'd with the mighty Weight and uninterupted Succession of Miseries, how wouldst thou exulta should all these Blisses flow in upon thee? Ask thy most secret Recesses, whether they could so expand themselves as to receive the Joy which must needs sprind up from such exquisite Happiness, consider'd purely as thy own only. But further yet, that if any other Person, equally dear to to thee as thy ownfelf, should enjoy the same Happinels, this would double thy Joy, because thou wouldst be as glad for his Sake as thy own: Again, if two, or three, or more, thus dear to thee, were in the fame bleffed Condition, this Joy would be multiplied equally for every one of these. Now, according to this way of arguing, what can we suppose will be the rejoicing in Heaen, where Angels and Saints innumerable partake of the Happiness which I have been but very imperfectly describing; and every one of these united in a Charity to fervent, that none of them; loves any of the rest less than himself, and conseof saved all chair most vaws it asiat requently. quently will rejoice for each of them, as much as for himfelf?

If then the Heart of Man be scarce large es nough to contain his Joy, for his own fingle Happines how shall it find room for so many Joys so vaftly increased, so often multiplied? Again, in regard we naturally rejoice in the Felicity of another in Proportion to the love we bear to that Perfon; it will follow from hence, that fince in that State God is incomparably more dear to every Saint than that Saint is to himself, and all his Brethren to him, every Saint will consequently feel more Satisfaction, and exult incomparably more in the Glory and Blessedness of God, than he will in his own and all his Brethrens put together. And if they so love God with all their Heart, and all their Soul, that even All their Heart, and Mind, and Soul wants Room for the Largeness of their Affections; they will certainly rejoice too with all their Heart, and Mind, and Soul so exquisitely, that even all their Heart, and Mind, and Soul, shall overflow and be too narrow to contain the Fulness of their Joy.

Tell me then, O my God and my Lord, my Hope and the Delight of my Heart, whether this be the Joy meant by thy Blessed Son, when he says to his Disciples, John 16. 24. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. For I have here discovered a Joy, that seems not only full, but even more than tull: Since, after all our Faculties are filled, there still remains sresh Matter for

rejoicing:

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rejoicing; Matter more than can be comprehended, more than can ever be exhaufted: And therefore the whole of that Joy can never enter into the Persons partaking in it; but they may very properly be faid Matt 25. to enter into the joy

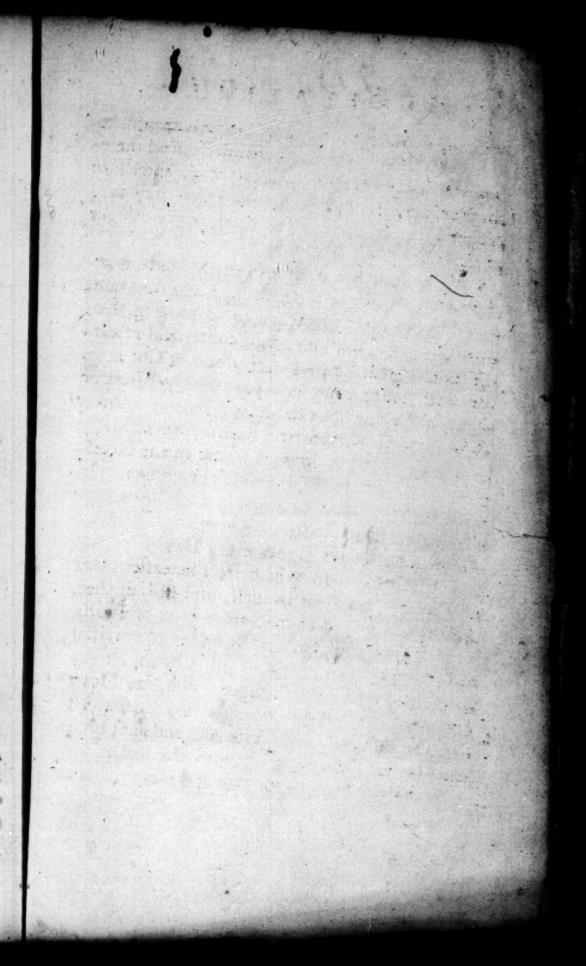
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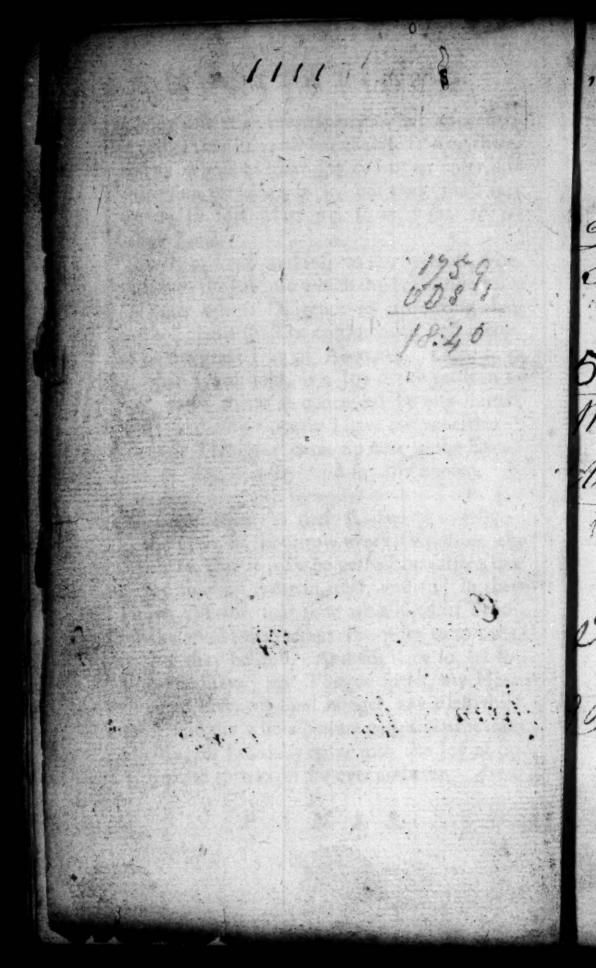
Say then, Lord, and inform thy Servants, whether this be the Joy into which thy faithful Servants shall enter whose Diligence in improving their Lord's Talents shall be commended and rewarded at the great Day of Account. 1 Cor 2. 9. But that I am told, is a Joy never yet leen or heard, or so much as conceived by any human Mind; and consequently I have not yet either in Words or Thoughts come up near to the Excellence of that Joy prepared for thy choien. thort, their Joy shall be equal to their Love, and their Love equal to their Knowledge of thee : Let the Love of thee grow every Day more and more here, that it may be perfect hereafter; that my Joy may be great in itself, and full in thee. I know, O Lord, that thou art a God of Truth, O make good thy gracious Promises to me, that my Joy may be full, And till it be so, let my Mind meditate, my Tongue speak, my Heart defire and love, my Soul hunger, my Flesh thirst after it, and my whole Nature gasp and pant most earnestly, till I actually enter into the Joy of my Lord, there to remain for ever and ever. Amen.

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Richard Eroyoon born Tobruary the 10th 1759 Coward Eroydon born May 29 th 1960 Daniell Croydon Born Sostonla 1941 1961 Thomas Croydon born Jung 5th 1763_ March 113 4 1965! Inn Croydon born Ezekiel Croydon to Baptird Jame 9 1768 Born May -